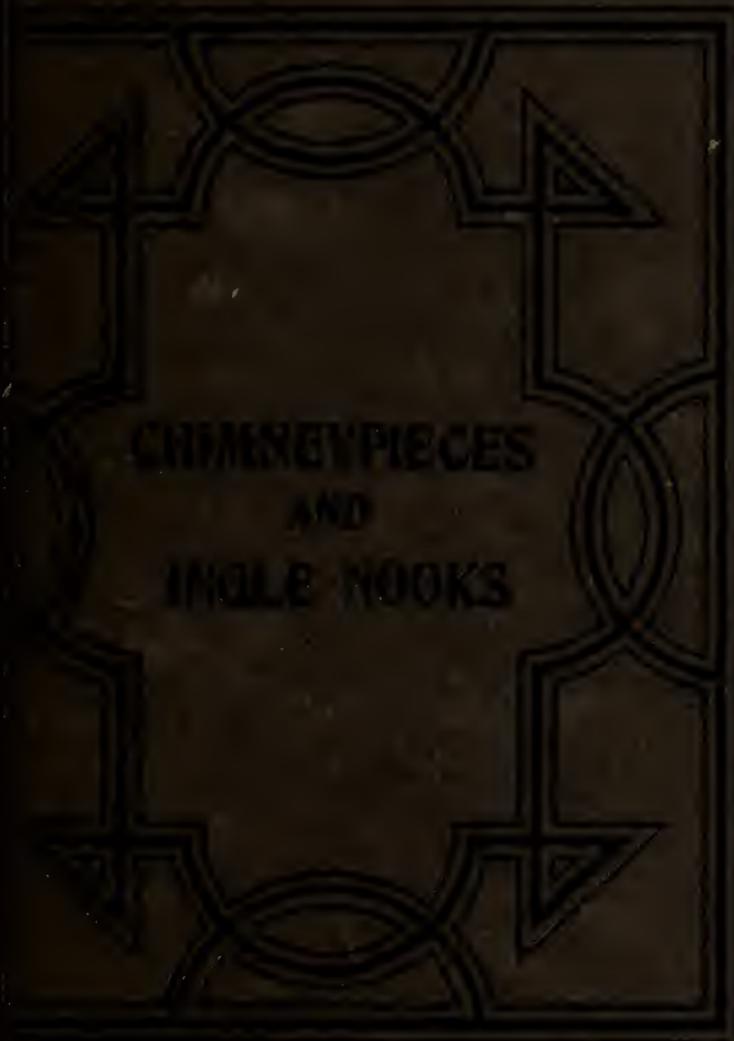


HOUSE DECORATION
SERIES



CHIMNEYPIECES
AND
INGLE-HOOKS

GUY
CADOGAN
ROTHBRY

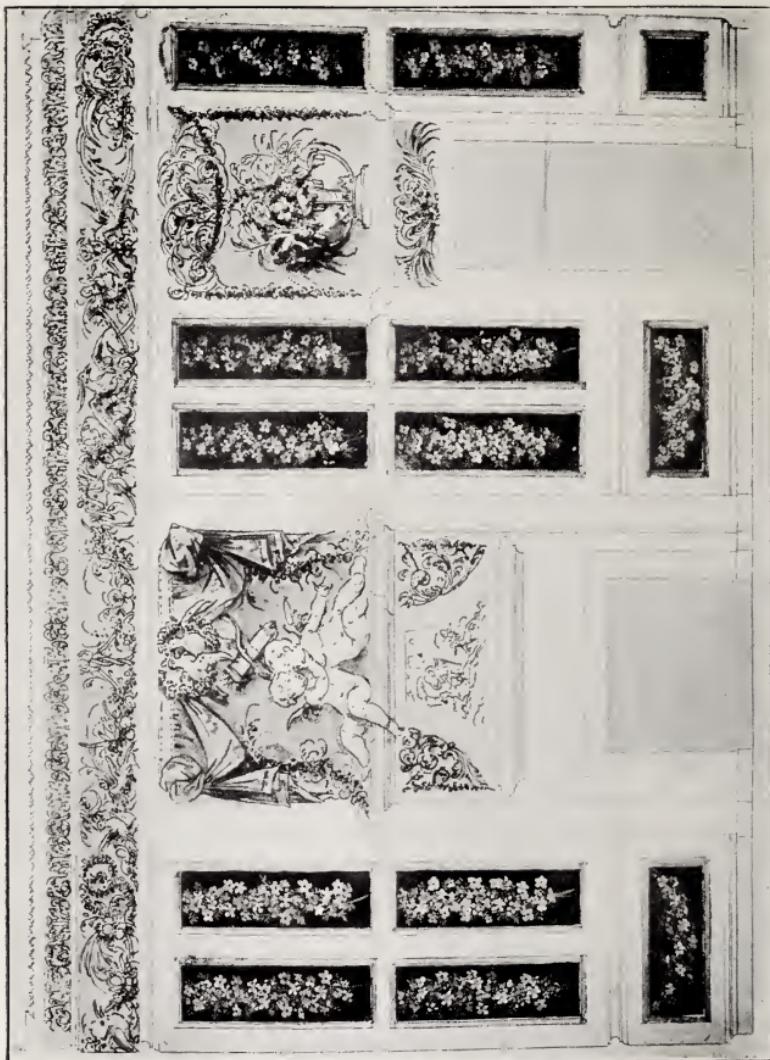
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Design by Grinling Gibbons for Hampton Court Palace.



1949
84

CHIMNEYPIECES AND INGLE NOOKS

THEIR DESIGN AND ORNAMENTATION

By
GUY CADOGAN ROTHERY

AUTHOR OF
“CEILINGS AND THEIR DECORATIONS”

LONDON
T. WERNER LAURIE
CLIFFORD'S INN

"Ceilings and Their Decoration" is valuable not only because it deals with a subject of considerable interest, but also because, in treating of the various styles . . . it helps us to realise the inherent defects of certain modern methods which we are apt to idly acquiesce in. . . . (a) Should appeal to all householders . . . He supplies a terse but admirable and in every way adequate description of the history of his subject . . . (b) . . . Related in a fluent and agreeable manner sufficiently technical to be of practical use to the student . . . and yet not too detailed to bore the general reader . . . (c) Mr Rothery is a master of his subject . . . the book makes its first appeal to the artist and architect . . . treated from an original point of view . . . with criticism which is essentially stimulating. (d) The name of Mr Rothery will be familiar to many of our readers and . . . they will be aware how thoroughly he gathers his facts and how ably he presents them. (e) May be very warmly recommended to students of architecture and to all who are interested in the house beautiful. (f)

(a) Morning Post.
(b) Bookman.
(c) Scotsman.

(d) The Field.
(e) The Decorator.
(f) Aberdeen Free Press.

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PREFACE.

THE decided revival in the interest taken in designing and decorating chimneypieces makes it desirable that we should review the whole subject.

In writing this book the aim has been to trace the development of the fireplace and what we may call its façade, and to point out the chief features characterising successive periods and different countries. It will be seen that in Northern Europe the fireplace has been, at least since the 12th century, a fairly good index of the genuine art appreciations of the age in which they were built and beautified.

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CHIMNEYPIECES AND INGLE NOOKS

CHAPTER I.

BEGINNINGS AND EARLY DEVELOPMENTS.

So much romance attaches to the phrase “hearth and home,” so deep is the sentiment connected with it and all that it conjures up to the imagination, that it is extremely difficult to realize how new are those things known to us as fireplaces and chimney-pieces. We are apt to take them very much for granted, and regard them as coeval with the dawn of civilization in northern climes. They appear to us so necessary, such a natural outcome of structural design. Yet the truth is, they possess no great antiquity, as antiquity is measured by the long strides of human progress.

It is doubtful whether either the Greeks or Romans—in spite of the fact that their dwellings were often large, elaborately planned, and provided with many luxuries

of the utilitarian and the purely artistic kinds — had even rudimentary chimneys in their houses until quite a late period. Such remains of buildings as have come down to us outside of Pompeii, afford no evidence of their use, and no direct evidence is to be gathered from contemporary writers. Palladio certainly mentions two ancient fire-places, one at Baiæ and the other near Civita Vecchia. He describes them as standing in the middle of the rooms, columns supporting architraves, whereon were placed the pyramids or funnels through which the smoke was conveyed away. It is true frequent mention of fire and smoke is made by both Greek and Roman authors when referring to home life, but always in a somewhat vague way. Homer makes Ulysses, when in Calypso's grotto, express the fervent desire that he might see the smoke ascending from Ithaca ; in other words, he was home-sick, and longed for the family hearth. But although there can be no smoke without a fire, there can be both smoke and flame without a fireplace or chimney. Indeed, in most cases poets and prose writers alike refer to the nuisance of smoke and the inconvenience of the resulting soot ; it is only

in a secondary sense that smoke stands as the emblem of home. Putting aside those writers chiefly concerned with history, customs, and manners, we may go, as more germane to our present inquiry, straight to a technical authority.

Now, we find Vitruvius in his chapter on "Stucco" saying :—

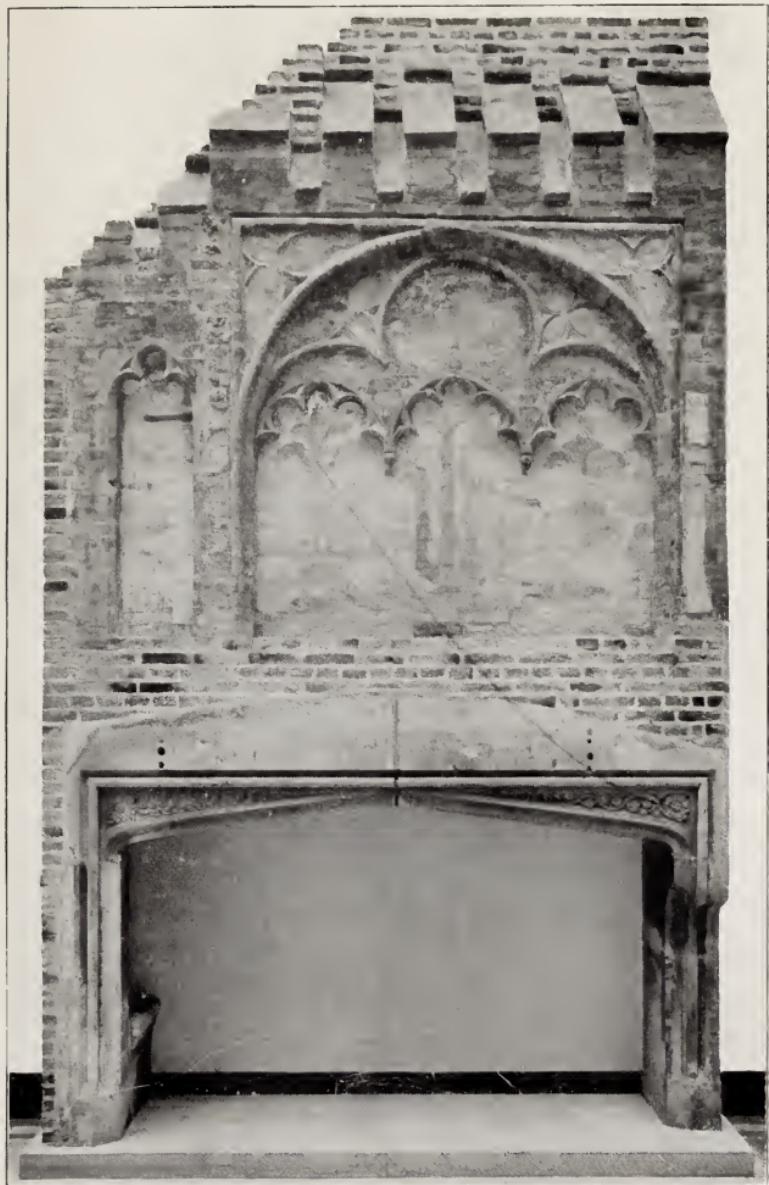
"Some cornices are of plain, others of carved work. In small private rooms, or where fire or many lights are used, they should be plain, to allow of being more easily cleaned; in summer rooms and excedra, where the smoke is in such small quantity that it can do no injury, carved cornices may be used; for white works, from the delicacy of their colour, are always soiled, not only with the smoke of the house itself, but also with that of the neighbouring buildings." In another chapter, while still on the topic of decoration, he adds :—

"In winter triclinia, neither large pictures nor delicate ornaments in the cornice, under the vault, are to be introduced, because they are soon injured by the smoke of the fire, and of the quantity of lights used therein."

Clearly all this, from the pen of a master builder, points to the non-existence of

chimneys. We are face to face with a system of heating very deficient, one creating smoke and dependent on the hypæthral opening in the roof, or on the doors and windows for its escape. He held that fires for the purpose of warming apartments must of necessity destroy decorations. Vitruvius, who, it must be remembered, wrote as late as the first century of our era, is so minute in his instructions to builders that it is inconceivable that he should have omitted to mention fireplaces and chimneys had any been in common use in his days. This seems conclusive enough, but we may go further.

Much of our knowledge of the general life of Greece and Rome, or at all events, of its interesting details, is derived from a close study of contemporary pictures. These are mostly painted on pottery, specimens of which exist from the archaic to the latest periods. We have also mural paintings and some mosaics, these belonging to the age of Imperial luxury. Taken altogether, these afford at once a valuable and an abundant source of information, particularly so as regards the pottery, a great deal of which was made to supply the everyday wants of



15th Century Chimneypiece from Prittlewell.

households, and was naturally adorned with a heterogeneous gallery of pictures, now touching upon great events—the doings of gods, demi-gods, and heroes—anon condescending to record the most trivial of domestic affairs. Details that were far too familiar for writers to note have come down to us, thanks to the graphic touches of the humble painter. It is therefore very significant that both pottery designs and mural paintings are scanned in vain for any representation of the fireplace as we understand the term, or any sign of a chimney. On the other hand, we are given plenty of pictures showing fires alight in the open, being used for purposes of religious ceremonial, military routine, or that most important domestic duty, cooking. We also see brasiers, or *foculi*, introduced into the home circle, these great dishes, filled with embers or flaming wood, resting on their lower rim or standing on tall feet, and forming the centre of groups intent on gossip or culinary efforts.

Brasiers are, of course, essentially a device of a chimneyless people, invented to mitigate the inconvenience of smoke in more or less close confined apartments, and to overcome the impossibility of having open hearths in

luxuriously equipped rooms. They were used mainly for bringing glowing embers from great wood fires kindled outside, in the courtyards or kitchens, and subsequently were replenished with prepared charcoal, the *ligna cocta* or *coctilia* of the Latins. This was a means of warming that commended itself to a people dwelling in countries blessed with ardent summers, genial springs and hot autumns, where the winters were short-lived inconveniences. The use of brasiers persisted long in many lands. They were common in Greece up to the 18th century, were retained even longer in Italy, practically over the whole of Spain and much of France. In most of these countries the open brasier prevailed. We read of Antonio Magliabecchi, the famous librarian of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, that he used to move about among his books with a kind of warming pan attached to his arms, so that he might warm his hands during the cold days of a Florentine winter. Paintings by the great Spanish masters give us a good idea of the large, ornate brass dishes, on low legs, full of live coals, so commonly used even in the richly upholstered and carpeted palaces. France, where the Emperor Julian

was nearly poisoned as the result of burning coals being brought into his Parisian winter quarters, was up to comparatively recently the land of the *chauffrette*, or closed-in brasier, the foot warmer.

From the same rich sources of painted pottery and walls we also gather some fairly comprehensible details concerning the *hypocausta*, or hot air basement stove, used both in public baths and in private houses, wherefrom one or two rooms, even a whole house, could be warmed. Authors are also definite enough upon this method. The *hypocausta* was a stove placed in the basement of a building, and was connected with one or several chambers above by means of channels in the thickness of the walls, and intended to convey hot air, from which smoke itself could not always be excluded. According to Seneca, these channels opened into chambers by way of a lion's or a dolphin's head, whose gaping mouth could be closed by means of a trap. In this way hot air was admitted or excluded as desired. It is to be observed that these channels do not appear to have been carried upon a level with or above the roof in order to emit smoke after the gases had stored their heat

in the brick conduit. The idea was rather to conserve heat to the fullest extent, so that, when the chamber outlets were closed, the tubes began and ended in the stove. Of course smoke must have escaped into the apartments, and may be one of the reasons for Vitruvius's cautions. No doubt by careful choice of fuel, wood soaked in water and then dried, dressed with oil lees, or the use of *coctilia*, or again by keeping a brisk fire with closed traps until the brickwork was hot and the fuel reduced to embers, the smoke nuisance may have been considerably mitigated. Horace seems to draw a distinction between the warming of houses of the well-to-do and the makeshift expedients adopted in wayside inns, which brought water to his eyes. The *hypocausta* was clearly a matter of luxury and not of common use.

In addition to the pictorial records of the ancients, and the less satisfactory cursory remarks of their authors, the study of architectural vestiges affords occasional useful information. Winkelmann, in describing his discoveries at Herculaneum, says:—

“ Of chimneys in apartments no traces are to be seen. Charcoal was found in some of

the rooms in the city of Herculaneum, from which we may conclude that the inhabitants used only charcoal fires for warming themselves. . . . In the villas, however, which were situated without Rome, on eminences where the air was purer and colder [than in the city], the ancients had hypocausta, which were perhaps more common than in the city. Stoves were found in the apartments of a ruined villa when the ground was dug up. . . . Below these apartments there were subterranean chambers, about the height of a table, two and two under each apartment, and close on all sides. The flat top of these chambers consisted of very large tiles, and was supported by two pillars, which, as well as the tiles, were joined together, not with lime but some kind of cement, that they might not be separated by the heat. In the roofs of these chambers there were square pipes made of clay, which hung half-way down into each, and the mouths of them were conveyed into the apartment above. Pipes of the like kind built into the walls of the lower apartment rose into another in the second storey, where their mouths were ornamented with the figure of a lion's head in burned clay. A narrow passage, of about

two feet in breadth, conducted to the subterranean chambers, into which coals were thrown through a square hole, and the heat was conveyed from them by means of the before-mentioned pipes into the apartment immediately above, the floor of which was composed of coarse mosaic work, and the walls were encrusted with marble. This was the sweating apartment. The heat of this apartment was conveyed into that on the second storey by the clay pipes enclosed in the wall, which had mouths opening into the former, as well as the latter, to collect and afford a passage to the heat, which was moderated to the upper apartment, and could be increased or lessened at pleasure."

However, as we have said, the *hypocausta* in private buildings was the exception, not the rule. Apart from the brasiers, the most general way of warming apartments with the ancients was by means of a fire of wood or charcoal built up on a hearth, a flat stone or a concave depression, placed in the centre of rooms, the smoke from which was conveyed away through an opening in the roof, or simply by way of the doors and windows. Sometimes such hearths were placed close to walls. When the Roman villa was dis-



Florentine Stone, about 1450.

covered at Bognor in Sussex, a hearth of this kind was found. It was formed of a stone slab and some bricks, firmly clamped together by means of iron ties in such a way as to provide a well-like enclosure. In fact, this luxurious dwelling was provided with just such a device as is adopted by campers and humble picnickers anxious to boil a kettle or broil a bird. In this instance there were no signs of any chimney connection, and there were no traces of any superstructure.

A limited qualification is here necessary. We have mentioned above that Pompeii must be excepted from our general remarks. It is a fact that in one or two instances an elementary type of fireplace and chimney has been found in that buried city, and if Palladio is correct, in two other instances elsewhere. In the buried cities the fireplaces are seen in the shape of a cavity, formed of an elliptical truncated cone of brick, and surmounted by pipes, or smoke channels in earthenware. These are extremely rare, and probably formed part of the kitchen equipment, for they have a somewhat close resemblance to the present local *fornello*, or small solid structures of brick or stone masonry, with

a tiny depression for burning charcoal. The point is that even this quite rudimentary type is only met with in a very few instances at Pompeii, and a still more rudimentary stage suggested in still rarer cases, as at Bognor.

Now, this brings us into contact with the primitive methods of semi-nomadic tribes and hut dwellers. Mr E. Way Elkington in his book, "The Savage South Seas," writing about the wooden huts of the coastal villages in New Guinea, which huts are built on piles over the sea and roofed with palm leaves, says that specially hard timber is chosen for the flooring. "One log tougher than the rest is placed in position by the door, and on this a fire will probably be burning and a woman squatting by it, cooking her lord and master's evening meal. The rank, yellow smoke which curls round her does not inconvenience her in the least. She takes no heed of it, but blows away at the embers. She never fears that the fire will spread and burn down her home." But while the smoke-grimed interior of tents and huts are commonplaces to travellers among savage and barbaric people, in certain regions local exigencies brought about a

refinement. Where fuel was scarce some method of conservation of heat must have early been hit upon. This is peculiarly true of treeless and bushless lands, where the droppings of herds and cattle form the principal source of fuel. Experience must have soon taught that the building up of a protecting wall at back and sides was necessary, both for economy and comfort. The next step would be to partly cover in the structure with stones, turf, or mud, leaving an opening in front to feed the fire, and another at the top for the escape of smoke or the reception of a cooking vessel. In this we have undoubtedly the prototype of the mound-like enclosed stoves of Central Asia and the northern regions of our Continent. Enclosure would, of course, bring about the necessity for a smoke channel, a chimney, either central and more or less vertical, or lateral, underground, and horizontal. The development of the stove as a means of house-warming must be dealt with at length at a later stage.

A desire to provide safeguards against conflagration rather than the idea of conservation of heat was the guiding principle responsible for the evolution of the semi-

enclosed fireplace and the chimney. Field practice taught the advantages of building up a fire within the confines of a back wall and two side wings, rather than on a mere slab, so the central position of the hearth was changed for that of a space against a chamber wall, often with disastrous results. This experience would lead to a lining of the wall at the back, especially when much wood, or merely reeds and mud were used in construction. We have examples of this even so late as in the rebuilding of Bolsover Castle by the Cavendishes in the 17th century. The training up of the side wing enclosures would follow the provision of a back plate, and then the benefits to be derived from a side opening in the outer wall, and some means of directing the smoke towards it, would sooner or later become evident, and thus the fireplace and chimney came into existence. We can see all this in the early examples of Romanesque buildings.

A development which seems so self-evident, a method which appears quite natural to the merest tyro in log-hut building was, however, long delayed. It assuredly did not reach us from Egypt, a land where

the principle of the hot-air stove, not only for baking, but for incubating eggs, was well understood. Nor did it come from Greece or Rome. It probably suggested itself to builders in wood ; but even so, it was a very late invention.

With us, as we have seen, the Roman invaders used the brasier and the open, chimneyless hearth, so that it is evident they cannot have found any superior device of native contrivance. Indeed, what we know of Celtic England shows us a country of single chamber dwellings, later having cell-like excrescences, with the central hearth stove beneath a hypæthral opening. Among the Saxons the brasier was also used, probably descending from Latium through the intermediary of the Romanised Britons. But the prevailing style with them was not modelled on the Roman villa or military castle. With them, as with the Celts, the single chamber, be it a small room or a large hall, was the rule, and therein a fire was built up on a central hearthstone, placed beneath the roof opening.

That this method was general down to a late period is evidenced by the institution of the curfew, the Norman *couver-feu*, a

measure instigated, no doubt, largely by political motives, yet based on the unquestionable policy of public safety. That a law should be enacted obliging everybody to cover over the house fire at the approach of night, whether that fire was built in a pit or piled up on a flat or raised hearth-stone, would be understandable enough, because it provided against the danger of conflagration resulting from unattended open fires, while conserving the heat that would still be given out from the embers. Incidentally, of course, the institution of the curfew made the detection of secret assemblies an easy matter, but the law had to be based on a more obvious requirement of the commonweal to make it possible. It is significant, as we shall see in the next chapter, that the curfew should have been abolished by Henry I. in 1100, when the chimney, with all that it implied, was beginning to make its appearance. Which, at all events, demonstrates how political benefits may result from progress in the arts of peace. Certainly the change of an open hearth into the fireplace was an immense step towards comfort and a great artistic gain, as the following pages will show.



Italian, 15th Century.

CHAPTER II.

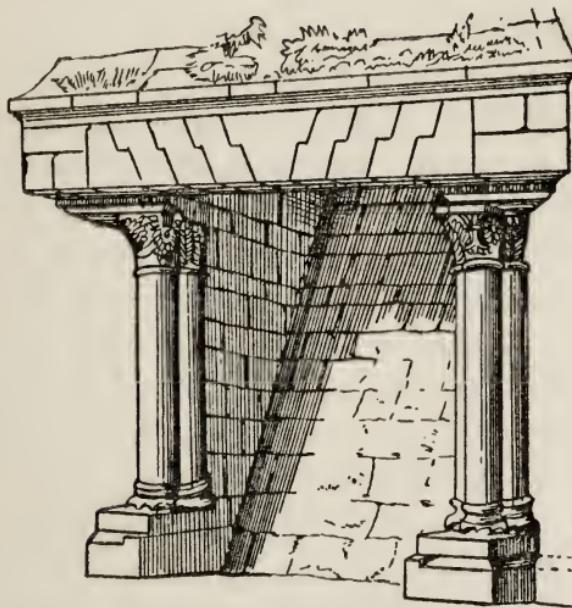
ROMANESQUE AND EARLY GOTHIC EXAMPLES.

IN the Romanesque we have a sterner rendering of that phase of Roman architecture adopted for military and semi-military edifices. Many of the earlier examples of the Romanesque give us tower-like structures, with a single chamber to each floor. Sometimes such keeps form a corner of a more imposing building, with main hall and other clustered apartments. In these halls usually the flat hearthstone, chimneyless, and placed in the centre, prevailed. Several instances of this arrangement have come down to us. At Penshurst Place, Kent, the Banqueting Hall has a central fireplace, a mere platform of stones with an octagonal kerb.

The Bayeux tapestry, though dealing with a military adventure, gives us views of several interiors, yet while we frequently

see preparations for feasting, as well as conclaves held, there are no indications of fireplaces or of chimneys. Other pictorial records afforded by illuminated MSS. are equally negative as to evidence on these points. On the other hand, we find authors as early as 1069 referring to *caminatæ*, a term which has been interpreted by many as denoting rooms provided with chimneys, probably on the ground that Papias the grammarian, writing in 1051, defined *fumarium* as *caminus per quem exit fumus*. But it may be that this *fumarium*, this highway for the escape of smoke, was something of the nature of a hood or funnel, arranged somewhat after the manner of the *hypocausta* pipes described by Winkelmann, only having an opposite function—that is, the conveying away of smoke from open hearths, of which we have still many examples. Then we would regard *caminatæ* as chambers having hearths, but provided with hypæthral or other openings, with some structure training the smoke towards the opening: an improvement on mere dependence upon windows and doorways. It was a considerable step forward, which was to be developed successfully, for we find regularly-designed fireplaces with

rudimentary chimneys making their appearance with the later Romanesque builders. Conisborough, Rochester, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Tonbridge, and Somerton Castles, Clifford's Tower and Durham Abbey kitchen in England, and Cashel and Kilmallock in Ireland, bear witness to this.



LOWER CHIMNEYPEICE, CONISBOROUGH CASTLE.

Of these, Conisborough possesses peculiar interest, both to the archæologist and the architect, in this particular connection, because two of the keep's chambers contain fireplaces which are characterised by very

instructive transition features. That is to say, the hearths are here of a primitive type, but are provided with astonishingly well developed frames and hoods, as well as with quite effective chimneys. This keep, which was built for William de Warren under license from William Rufus, and therefore dates back to the last decade of the 11th, or the early years of the 12th century, is a tower rising from a spreading base, has immensely thick walls, and only one chamber on each floor. On the first floor is the principal chamber, and here is seen a large fireplace, the hearth against the wall, but not recessed, coming, indeed, well into the room. In order to secure draught and the escape of smoke, the wall behind the hearth-stone slopes backwards from base upwards, where it is connected with a shaft. The jambs are in the form of wing walls of moderate projection just covering the hearth, and are ornamented in front with a cluster of three non-engaged columns. These columns stand on a single base, have plain shafts, with individual and slightly foliated capitals. Another interesting detail is that the chimney lintel or architrave, which is straight, is formed of large dressed stones,



Italian Early 16th Century.

the centre one being wedge-shaped, with cut-in sides on the lower half. The stones on both sides are hipped on their face towards the keystone and cut-in on their outward side, thus the whole row is joggled. A method of keying such as this is often resorted to, with modifications in the details of joggings. At Cashel, where we have a fine example of Norman work, the same style is adopted, while in a much later example at Edlingham Castle, Northants, circa 1330, in the Decorated style, the long narrow stones are given a curious wavy form, something like the nebûl line in heraldry. Joggling was a system of gaining strength possessing distinct artistic merits. But to return to Conisborough. The architrave of our specimen supports a moderately proportioned flat-topped hood. In the upper chamber the fireplace is constructed on the same principle, also having a sloping back, wing walls, and three clustered columns, only it is rather smaller, with flat, hoodless top. In both examples, while the hearth is in the room, the smoke is trained away from the interior towards the throat, where it joins a shaft carried upwards to the ramparts. It is conjectured that some form of top or stack

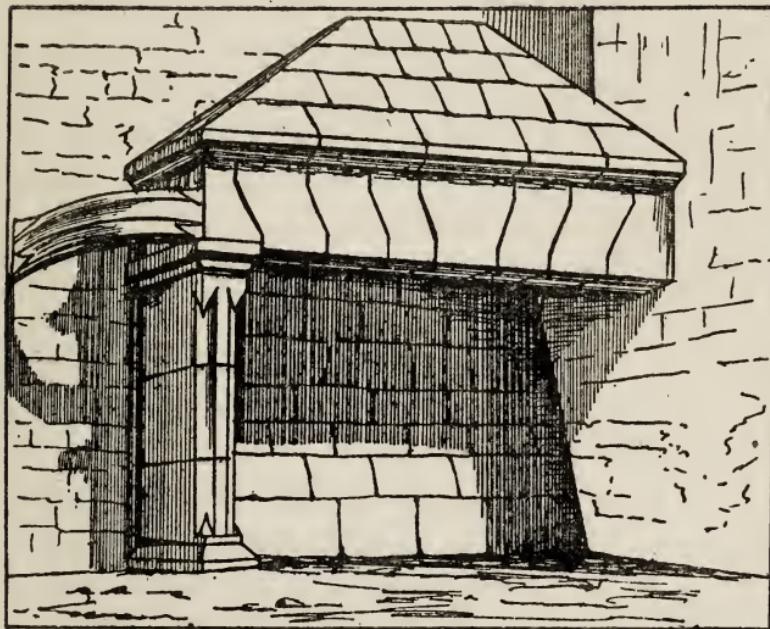
may have existed originally. It will be seen that in these we find utilitarian details turned conscientiously to decorative account. It is with us the advent of the chimney-piece.

Rochester Castle, which was built by Bishop Gundulph about the same time as Conisborough, is a more pretentious edifice, but possesses rather more primitive fireplaces. They are placed against the walls, are slightly recessed in circular form, have semi-circular arched openings, with two columns at side, a tall breast, and small, flat-topped hood, the whole being nearly flush with the walls. The hearths, sides, and backs form a sort of conical cavity, reaching outwards to a loophole opening, placed uniformly with the regular loopholes. A zigzag or chevron ornamentation is cut as a border to the arched opening.

At Colchester Castle the fireplaces, contrived against the walls, are recessed, have a lower stone-course, with brickwork above. The bricks are rather narrow, and are laid slanting, first to right, then to left, but not in regular herring-bone style, inasmuch as we find three courses to the left, then two to the right, and so on. The backs are shallow,

but slope upwards, while the openings are arched.

At Newcastle-on-Tyne, built in 1172-77, the arched opening is segmental, and is adorned with the Norman billet.



CORNER FIREPLACE, CASHEL.

At Penshurst one of the ancient stone fireplaces has a raised hearth, slender jambs, flat breast, with crenelated base, and pointed hood. Britton gives a picture of a Norman fireplace from Winwall House, Norfolk, of

uncertain date. It is placed against the wall, has a raised, slightly recessed hearth, wing walls of moderate projection, slightly decorated lintel, and conical hood carried to the ceiling. The back has the angles filled in, thus presenting a five-sided chamber.

In Ireland we have found examples of Norman work at Kilmallock and at Cashel. The latter is curious, because it is built in an angle, one wall forming the back, which is given an upward slope from the base, while the other wall is utilised as the enclosing wing. There is a broad, joggled lintel, and a truncated, pointed hood. A very quaint feature is the curved masonry arm, like a horizontal flying buttress, carried from the side lintel to the wall.

In France regularly constructed fireplaces seem to have come in with the 12th century. They were placed against the walls, were provided with jambs to enclose the hearths, were crowned by architraves supporting well developed hoods connected with smoke outlets.

In Flanders the change appears to have developed much earlier. At the Château des Comtes, Ghent, there are three very instructive examples hidden away in the

basement. They are little more than arched recesses in the walls, though in one case the back is circular, and the arch is made to spring from the floor base with slight projection, so that we find rudimentary jambs. Other similar fireplaces are seen in several houses in the town. Then, in a fine old merchant's house in the rue Basse, possessing a very primitive recessed arrangement in the basement, we come upon something far more advanced on the first floor, the fireplace being provided with jambs and pillars, the summits spreading out into corbels adorned (if that is the fitting word for the hideous mask) with a human face. These belong to the 10th and 11th centuries. At Bruges, in the gatehouses of the Porte de Gands and the Porte Ste Croix, we find quaint, recessed fireplaces, with circular backs, mouldings round the openings, but no jambs, the lintels triangular, with long bases. In the first example the top of the lintel is outlined for nearly its whole length with a course of upright bricks. In the second there is a semi-circular course of bricks some few inches above the lintel. These additions can have no other than a decorative object.

With us other rudimentary fireplaces have been recorded at Clifford's Tower, York ; at Tonbridge Castle, built by Richard de Clare, temp. William II. ; in the keep of the late Norman period at Middleham Castle, Yorks (provided with smoke shafts) ; at the Jews House, Lincoln, circa 1150, where the fireplace is built on an arch over the entrance door, and is provided with a semi-external smoke flue rising to the eaves ; at the Pottergate Arch, Lincoln, temp. Edward I. ; at Somerton Castle, Lincolnshire, built by Antony Bek (subsequently Bishop of Durham), who had licence from Edward I. in 1281 to crenelate his castle ; and at Boothby Pagnall, also in Lincolnshire. This last has a fireplace against the wall, the hearth being enclosed by a raised masonry kerb with rounded ends ; it has no jambs or wing walls, but a hood juts out from the wall above the hearth, and is connected with a smoke channel.

This form of construction at Boothby Pagnall is, of course, a transition device, a variation of the roof funnel hood, placed over the central hearths in large halls and in kitchens.

In the *Monasticum Gallicum* a Roman-

esque kitchen roof is pictured. It appears as a conical mound, having three rows of conical chimneys, one row above the other, each chimney shaped somewhat like a miniature kiln or bottle; at the top is a rather larger chimney, belching forth smoke. No details are given, but elaborate as it is this does not necessarily entail a regular fireplace or even a smoke funnel. What was usually done was to build the roof over the hearth in the form of a cupola, this being louvred, or provided with chimneys. To facilitate the removal of smoke and create draught the hood was sometimes added. The pierced hood cupola was certainly adopted at the great kitchen of the Romanesque monastery of Fontevrault, which has a tall pyramidal octagon dome with chimney at top and a few openings lower down. At a much later period the Great Hall at Westminster School was provided with a central brasier, placed under a mere louvred projection in the timbered roof. The roof hood, however, was frequently in the form of an inverted funnel, suggesting the hood of the chimneypiece as seen in the examples above described.

We may take this as the general rule,

though the examples referred to show that the chimney and smoke flues were early utilised. Nevertheless, regular chimney flues, consisting of square or cylindrical masonry shafts carried above the roof ridge, and provided with a more or less ornamental opening, did not come into anything like wide use with us until the reign of Henry III., when architectural art had made great strides, especially in the development of details tending towards a combination of comfort with decoration.

This was the period of the Early English or Lancet style of Gothic, with its development of deep recesses, lancet form of arches and openings, adoption of small slender pillars, often several slender ones being grouped round a larger one, and moderate use of foliage as decorative motifs.

At Aydon Castle, Northants, we have two chimneys, which, though belonging to the year 1270 or thereabouts, have little of the Gothic feeling. One, however, with a square opening and no lintel, has a rounded hood supported by a group of slender pillars on each side. The second has also a square opening, crowned by a broad lintel and square hood.



-Italian, Early 16th Century.

At Abingdon Abbey, Berkshire, a West-saxon foundation of the 7th century, rebuilt in the 13th century, there is a fine chimney-piece in the Prior's room. It is against the wall, has a deep, circular recess with brick back, jambs formed of stone pillars with foliated capitals, supporting a tall, stone hood. The throat, covered by the hood, is in direct communication with a flue, carried up and ending in a chimney closed by pretty gables, each pierced for the escape of smoke. This is a practical adaptation of the older louvre, itself an improvement on the mere hypæthral opening, much in vogue both here and on the Continent.

Stokesay, Shropshire, provides us with another example, very similar to that at Abingdon, but with less elaborate chimney.

CHAPTER III.

THE MIDDLE GOTHIC.

WITH the general advance in domestic architecture there came about a corresponding development of the fireplace. It had suffered somewhat as a social centre when the hospitable but inconvenient open hearth was removed to a side wall, and there more or less cut off by wings and dimmed by a low hanging hood. There was a certain exclusiveness in this arrangement, but as, indeed, the change had been introduced with a view to the exclusion of smoke, the advantages of an effective framing for the hearth were recognised. As the separate parts that go to make up the complete chimney-piece—the jambs or wing-walls, the architrave or lintel, the smoke collector or hood, were studied, it was seen that they possessed decorative possibilities. The removal of the

fireplace from the centre of the hall to the middle of one of the walls, or even to an angle of a room, as at Cashel, did not necessarily entail dwarfing. Builders were designing boldly, and chimneypieces as one of the chief interior features began to be built on a big scale. Everything tended towards this end, for spaciousness was aimed at in the Hall or other principal room. But then considerations of comfort and expediency brought about a fashion of dividing up a Hall, almost of placing a room within a room. There was the raised platform, with some kind of daïs for the great folk; the carved screens—often of considerable magnitude and closed in at the top—to cut off direct communication with outer lobby and domestic offices; fair oriels, with or without raised floors, and partly enclosed recess closets, forming useful withdrawing rooms; also minstrel and service galleries. All this led to the chimneypiece being developed along lines which made it at once a conspicuous detail, yet a further subdivision of a great assembly centre.

To some extent the practice of deep recessing, of building the fireplace within the wall's thickness, was abandoned or modified.

A long and deep hearth jutted well out into the room, first on a level with the floor, then raised. This was enclosed by wing walls, forming the jambs, pillars when they existed being merely used for purposes of adornment. These wings were often brought out at right angles from the wall, then turned at right angles again, so as to form niches within the fireplace. From wing to wing an arch was thrown, or a lintel formed, frequently carefully keyed by some such picturesque form of joggling as already mentioned. This supported the great hood above or formed part of the breast, a hood which was frequently carried up close to the wall cornice. This was intended at once as a smoke collector and a draught inducer, training air and smoke towards the throat of the chimneypiece, which was the immediate opening to the smoke shaft. So great were the proportions given that a man could stand upright on a hearthstone, or sit in comfort protected by the jamb and its inward-curving wing.

This was the general character of chimneypiece design and is found influencing the construction even in quite moderate sized dwellings. Of the magnitude they could

assume we may judge by examples still existing, and by that horrible story told by Froissart. He was staying at Foy in the winter of 1388, when Ernauton the Bastard of Spain, another guest, strolled into the crowded courtyard, and picking up a donkey with its panniers filled with logs, carried them into the Hall, and scattering the assembled men-at-arms and knights, threw wood, baskets, and struggling donkey, its legs kicking in the air, on to the andirons amidst the flaming mass, "to the great joy of the Comte de Foix and all who were there," the chronicler concludes. Let us hope that such cruelty was not of frequent occurrence, although tales of babes cast into the great fiery caverns are told with suspicious recurrence with us, in France and in Germany. Eckhart tells us, too, that in religious houses the scourge hung on the chimney hood, and culprits were tied to the jambs to be flogged, no doubt owing to the conspicuous position of the chimneypiece and this being the usual headquarters of Abbot or Prior.

Usually, however, the chimney corner was the place where the elders sat, entertaining guests, instructing the young, gossiping with neighbours, and confabulating over private

matters. In fact, the chimney corner was a refuge from the hurly-burly of the common meeting room, of it, yet set apart, a kind of privy closet associated with all that is most sacred connected with home, the Lares and Penates of Northern people. And so there grew into the French language that delightfully domestic phrase, *Sous le manteau de la cheminée*, to describe some friendly counsel quietly given, some semi-secret circulating in undertones among the family or inner circle.

Thus the fireplace became even more the spot where the host was found than the hospitable board itself. A rallying point like this, looming large, with conspicuous features, attracting the eyes of all who entered the room, naturally became the subject for careful thought, liberal handling and even lavish decoration.

Carved stone was the usual material for chimneypieces up to well in the 16th century. Such material as was locally at hand was commonly chosen. Thus we have hard building material in Derbyshire and Northumberland, white and greyish yellow chalk in Kent and Sussex, hard but easily handled sandstone and the more brittle, greyish



Flemish Coloured Marbles, 16th Century.

black slate in Italy, the soft stones in Normandy and Brittany. Bricks, however, were constantly utilised for backs and cheeks, possibly owing to their being cheaper, but also on account of their more or less refractory character as compared with many stones, and their capacity for storing and reflecting heat. Brick was also occasionally used for the decorative parts of the superstructure. Brick and stone were practically the only combination resorted to by builders at this period.

The carving often showed great technical skill. Incised lines, slight rounding, deep cutting, and complete relief were all used. But as a rule broad effects were aimed at, the carving alternating with large plain surfaces. These surfaces, however, were frequently painted in vivid colours, with the same bold lavishness as bright tints in daring contrast were applied to the stone walls, carved pillars and roofs of mediæval ecclesiastical and domestic building. For reasons that are sufficiently evident, chimney-pieces were more often cleaned than walls or ceilings, and consequently only tracings of such colouring have come down to us, though the indications are sufficient to show

how these monumental adjuncts to the Hall and the private apartments shone and glowed when the fires were lighted.

So great were the Halls at this period and in the following century that frequently one fireplace was not considered enough. We find some Halls provided with two, placed apart against the same wall; occasionally placed on opposite walls. The more usual course, however, was to increase the width of the hearth, and divide them into two or more fires. At Linlithgow Palace there is a very wide fireplace with four sets of pillars, thus dividing it into three hearths. At the Palais des Comtes, Poitiers, in the West of France, division is even more thorough, for the huge fireplace has not only four sets of columns, but these are backed by partitions, at right angles to the back, but communicating at the breast with the same smoke outlet. At Mont St. Michel there is another great chimneypiece covering three hearths. In the Salle des Preuses, Château de Coucy, Picardy, the hearth is doubled by a single dividing wall. This is a huge structure, with a wide but somewhat low opening, with columns and massive wing walls, the whole being of considerable pro-

jection. The overmantel is a square structure, adorned with nine figures of heroic proportions, carved in high relief, but otherwise the decoration is subdued, indeed somewhat rough in character.

In the Durham old Convent Kitchen, built in 1368, there is more than one fireplace, as was natural, placed against the wall as in other examples of even much later date, where we find hearths placed opposite each other in circular and octagon chambers. But these usually communicated with the same smoke shaft, though at Durham, where the hearths are deeply recessed, and have a wide arch formed of carved stone, each fireplace has a separate shaft carried up to the parapet. At St. Cross Hospital near Winchester, built by Cardinal Beaufort about 1450, the large fireplace has also an external stone shaft on the front wall.

A very interesting example of mixed stone and brickwork of this period, coming from Prittlewell in Essex, is to be seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington. The whole structure is about fourteen feet high. The lower part is of carved stone, and from the breast upwards of red brick. It is quite irregular in design, no

attempt at balancing being made, which may have been due to its position in a peculiarly shaped room. On the left the wing wall is a straight slab ; on the right the lower part is cut away, leaving a slight projection at the top, like a console. The ornamental carving is quite simple. Over the slightly arched opening there are two narrow pendentive panels, filled with low relief foliated design, little more than indicated. Under the hood, on the left, there is a stone seat. The brick-work entablature is square built, with curiously battlemented top, but lower on the left than on the right. The flat surface is adorned with a great sunken panel, marked out by heavy raised round mouldings, within which is an arch, sheltering a triple arch, the middle section being given special prominence, and below this is an arcade lost, with three equal-sized arched tops, the soffits ornamented with multifoil tracery. The two upper pendentives are filled with trefoils in tracery, having two huge lobes and a small one. There are no pillars, but under the arches are indications of long stalks with trilobed flowers. This square panel is placed slightly to the right, and flanking it on the left is a narrow sunken

trilobed arched panel. This whole form of decoration is most peculiar, and raises interesting problems as to the original condition of such a unique monument of our domestic architecture.

In the same collection there is a Florentine example belonging to the second half of the 15th century. It is a massive sandstone structure with well carved figures, showing considerable superiority in design and workmanship over the Prittlewell specimen, and, indeed, over much of the more pretentious French and Flemish work of the same period.

Far more Gothic in feeling is the large conically hooded fireplace on the ground floor in the Cascina Mirabello on the outskirts of Milan. It is of plastered stone, strikingly coloured. The opening is wide and tall, there is a good lintel, and the breast is covered by a great pointed hood, excellent in outline, decorated with boldly drawn coat-of-arms, specially interesting on account of the overbalancing disproportion of the crest, which marked heraldic work of this period generally; a fashion which continued in Teutonic countries even much later. Another curious point is that these

are the arms of the Visconti, though of different tinctures, affording an instance of an overlord granting his bearings, with sufficiently distinctive modifications, as a mark of favour.

The fashion of adorning the chimney architrave or the hood with armorial insignia was coming in at this period, though heraldic embellishments were not then used so lavishly as they were at a later date. This was probably due to the fact that the armorial fighting and jousting shields were still in general use, and were hung up on the walls. A happy introduction of heraldic symbols on a more modest scale than this Italian example is to be seen on a monumental chimneypiece at Tattershall Castle, Lincolnshire, which Ralph, Lord Cromwell, rebuilt about 1650. He placed his official badge as Treasurer of the King's Exchequer, a purse with gold tassels, in the middle of the handsomely carved architrave.

Coming back to more ambitious efforts we may refer to several Continental examples.

In the Salle des Gardes, in the Palace of the Duke of Burgundy at Dijon, belonging to the end of the 15th century, there is a very large fireplace with a raised hearth-



Gothic Work, Milan.

stone. The jambs are adorned with clustered diamond-shaped columns with plain shafts. There is a great projecting hood, providing quite a roomy chamber for the hearth. Above the pillars are two niches of Gothic tracery and pointed floreated flèches, affording asylum for two knights in armour. The central panel of the chimney breast is filled with excellent open tracery, partly geometric and partly foliated work, surrounding *fleur de lis* badges. It is a very fine example of this style.

The Flemings were also building large chimneypieces at this time, the Gothic being of the decorated type, with a certain Burgundian broadness in outline. In the Salle des Pas Perdus, at the Hôtel de Ville, Mons, there is a carved blue stone chimney-piece on a colossal scale. The jambs are severely plain, half the front space being occupied by octagonal pilasters with interlaced capitals. The frieze or lintel is broad, composed of large stones, richly joggled, the stones having elaborate outwardly curved and sharp incurved outlines for the purpose of keying and decoration. The chimney-breast is massive, divided into three panels by four columns topped by foliated finials,

the panels being covered with geometric tracery. At the Mont de Piété, Malines, there is another noteworthy example. It is of very considerable size, but has slender jambs with flat mouldings, and an engaged pillar with flat moulding. As in much of the Flemish work of this type, in place of a capital, the pillar and top part of the jamb is curved outward, to form an apparent support for the lintel, which is brought forward, is straight, broad, and adorned with elaborate mouldings, consisting of hollows, rounds and flat bands. Above this is a recessed frieze, with two notched shields placed in the centre leaning against each other. This is topped by a cornice. Over this is a fine overmantel of carved wood panels, with a central niche, the whole being crowned by an outwardly spreading fan canopy with delicate mouldings and foliated rosettes. Another chimneypiece with the same form of base is to be seen at Oudenarde, but the shafts of the pillars are octagonal. The shelf has a slightly projecting edge, finished off as a three-tier cornice, strongly carved. Above the flat broad frieze there is a well cut wreath of leaves, above which is a projecting cornice forming a shelf supporting small

pedestals in the centre and at each corner, with elaborately carved foliated pendants hanging from them. There is a truncated conical hood above, the centre part brought forward, the wings recessed. In the centre is a niche with a carved figure.

In the Château de Meillant, near Bourges, there is a very peculiar structure, reminding one of the great built-up stoves of Germany. It occupies nearly the whole of one end of the room, projects far in, being built with a broad front and two slanting wings, and the whole carried up to the ceiling. The fire opening is long and comparatively low, framed by pillars and a straight lintel, the hearth is raised. Above the lintel is a deep frieze, the superstructure, quite straight, is divided up into tiers of panels by a fillet and pillars, the lower panels being filled with figures sculptured in high relief. This quaint structure is carved with great skill and is painted.

We may bring our recital of examples to an end with a description of one to be seen in the National Museum at Florence, where it was removed from the Hall in the Palace of the Duc de Atene. It has a raised hearth, very slightly projecting jambs, with

acanthus capitals. The lintel, in the form of a carved frieze, supports a pointed hood. On each side of the hearth is a stone bench, slightly carved.

It will be seen that the characteristics of this period are the monumental character of the structures, the distinct hood, very generally conical in form, the breadth and depth of hearth, with the large opening, often providing accommodation for persons under the hood.

CHAPTER IV.

LATER GOTHIC AND EARLY RENAISSANCE.

STONE of one kind or another was the material chosen for chimneypieces anterior to the 16th century, and continued to be in vogue until the middle of that century, when wood came into favour, gradually usurping the primary place in England, northern and middle Europe. In Italy, however, wood was rarely used, except in conjunction with rubble and good plaster in some of the later examples of the hooded Gothic. At this period hard woods, generally oak, though sometimes walnut, were preferred. Decoration was carried to a high pitch, carving, painting, and occasional incrustations being called in to add beauty to the examples. Although chimneypieces continued to be monumental in size and character, they did not project so much into

the rooms as in earlier times, for the hearths, as a rule, were deeply recessed, the framing therefore, while retaining their towering aspect, came more on a level with the wall, often having little projection beyond that of the carvings, mouldings, and panelling on other parts of the walls. The hood was gradually replaced by a square form of structure covering the breast, often rising to the ceiling, and sometimes being carried to the upper floor, which acted as a foundation or support to the hearth in the room above. This last provision, indeed, is found in a good many of the larger examples even during the preceding period.

While so much pains were bestowed on embellishing the frame with carving and colour, greater attention began to be paid to the embellishment both of the lining of the fireplace and to its furniture. Hearths were sometimes level with the floor, and then not uncommonly surrounded by a stone kerb, plain or moulded, as at Penshurst; or they were raised, forming a platform at a slightly higher level than the rest of the room. The hearthstone itself was sometimes decorated, either with carvings in low relief, with incised tracery, or as in the early

Model from the Salons de Justice, Bruges.



16th century example at Lacock Abbey, Wiltshire, were inlaid with a pattern in lead. This was a prelude to the use of glazed tiles, which were first used to line the backs and wings. Tiles were introduced by the Dutch, late in this century. But the greater use of wood introduced into construction brought about the use of iron fire-backs, of which we shall have something to say later, as well as of fire-dogs, or andirons.

The magnificent decoration so generally prevailing is often alluded to in literature. In "Cymbeline" Shakespeare makes Iachimo describe Imogen's chamber :—

“The chimney
Is south the chamber, and the chimneypiece
Chaste Dian bathing ; never saw I figures
So likely to report themselves ; the cutter
Was as another nature, dumb ; outwent her,
Motion and breath left out.”

“The roof o' the chamber
With golden cherubins is fretted : her andirons—
I had forgot them—were two winking Cupids
Of silver, each on one foot standing, nicely
Depending on their brands.”

We will find plenty of instances of this in the examples from different countries now about to be described.

In the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, there is a charming little painted panel room, taken from a farmhouse near Alençon, which is supposed to have been used as a hunting-box by Henry IV. There is no carving, but every inch of panelling is covered with decoration in vivid colours. The chimneypiece consists of a rectangular projection into the room, carried from floor to ceiling, and provided with moderate sized, almost square opening, the hearth, back and sides being lined with stone. Over the breast is a panel picture of the Nativity, and round this, and all over the surface, are floral arabesques, with human and animal forms introduced. The colouring and gilding, though somewhat vivid, is good, but the drawing is decidedly coarse. As an example from quite a small country house, it is of great value, showing how far the decorative spirit was carried.

We must, however, hark back to earlier and more monumental examples.

In Jacques Cœur's most beautiful and interesting early Renaissance house at Bourges, we find a great chimneypiece which in outline and feeling is really Gothic. It is of carved stone, with stout wing walls, the

actual jambs being in the form of columns supporting a broad frieze, the top of which is embattled, and between the crenelations appear bowmen taking aim at the people in the Hall. Above this towers a large conical hood, adorned with two pinnacled dormer windows, with well carved figures looking out. This was probably brightly coloured when first put up. Another in the same house has an arched opening, the lintel is sculptured with figures in high relief, the breast is composed of three painted arched panels, above which are figures mounted on horseback.

At the Château de Chenonceaux, which was begun in 1515, there are several important chimneypieces, the two most remarkable being in the Guard Room and the Salle de Catherine de Medici. They were probably decorated for Diane de Poitiers. They are both huge affairs. The latter has broad pilasters with corbels supporting a cornice, from whence springs the overmantel, reaching to the ceiling. It is adorned with four colossal winged and partly draped female figures, standing on couchant lions, and holding scythes. The central panel is filled with a painting showing a recumbent Diana with stag.

At the Château de Blois we have quite a gallery of gorgeous chimneypieces. That in the Salle des Gardes de la Reine, of carved stone, has considerable projection. The jambs are adorned with Corinthian columns, fluted, the indents filled with broken and counterchanged astragals. The carving of lintel and cornices is very elaborate. The breast is carved straight up to the ceiling, and is provided with three decorated niches in front and two at the sides. The whole of the work here is of the very ornate Renaissance style. The columns are generally fluted and have foliated capitals. Figures are used, but usually ornamentally, being placed in niches. The surface is generally covered with rich scrollwork and arabesques, often as a framing to heraldic or symbolic devices.

In one instance of carved wood, almost flush with the panelled wall, the jambs are fluted pilasters supporting a lintel, frieze and a shelf, which projects slightly. The chimney breast is framed by two pilasters, highly carved, the space between these is filled with a graceful diaper of looped trellis, enclosing *fleur de lis* and the letter H placed alternately. This forms a background for a

large panel, enclosed by a wreath formed round a crowned H and well carved ribbons.

Another specimen elaborately carved is adorned with wonderfully rich Vitruvian scrolls on the lintel. The breast has two recessed panels, separated by columns covered with arabesques. On the panels appear respectively the crowned salamander of the French King, and the crowned greyhound of the Counts of Blois.

In the Chambre du Roi the chimneypiece is strongly carved, the lintel being covered with rich arabesques, as a frame to the Royal arms of France placed in the centre. The breast is covered with an open diaper of *fleur de lis*, forming a background to a large foliated crowned H. The crowned salamander, a good deal larger than life, we hope, appears again on a chimney breast, the panel being powdered with small flames. In this instance the capitals of the columns on the jambs are foliated scrollwork, merging into winged beasts. This same treatment of capitals is to be seen in the Salle Louis XII., where the capitals on the columns framing the chimney breast develop into winged beasts with grinning, grotesque heads. A marked feature here is the be-

wildering mixture of orders, a weakness of invention betraying that decadence which so soon showed itself in Renaissance work. This note of ill-considered exuberance is also seen in the heterogeneous character of the arabesques with leaves, flowers, fruits, birds, beasts, monsters, shells and so on. Yet the execution is perfect. This applies to the purely architectural members, the flora and fauna, and to the heraldic motifs. *Fleur de lis* are largely used, and we also see besides the salamander and greyhound, the crowned porcupine, all of which make very effective details in decoration, whether employed as central motifs or as mere items in the arabesque designs. One of these porcupines occurs on a fine chimneypiece with boldly moulded frieze, a painted Gothic entablature, and also in conjunction with well designed shields of the three *fleur de lis* of France and the ermine shield of Brittany, all carved in high relief.

In the Cabinet de Louis XII. there is a very characteristic semi-Gothic heraldic example. The jambs are peculiar. On the inside they are straight, at right angles with the back, but outside the wings are carried at an oblique angle. There is a small



English 17th Century Chimneypiece from Bromley-by-Bow.

column against the wall, and a larger one in front of the jamb, but hardly impinging on the fireplace opening, which is square. These support a frieze and cornice with strong rounded mouldings. The frieze is decorated with large, well designed *fleur de lis*. On the chimney breast there are two men-at-arms kneeling, acting as supporters of a large shield with three *fleur de lis*. Behind this is an angel crowning the shield. It should be remembered that legend says the *fleur de lis* was brought to Clovis by an angel from Heaven; which no doubt is essentially true, if the *lis* is taken to be a water iris, symbolical of spring and the duty of the King to see that his land was fruitful. This example is marked by bold, deep carving, but the background of decoration is of the simple foliated and geometric character belonging to Gothic design.

In the Musée de Cluny, Paris, which contains an instructive collection of fireplaces, there is one by Hugues Lallemand, brought from Troyes. The jambs are quite characteristic of a certain Renaissance work. They are formed of flat pilasters, the bases being enormous four-toed lions' paws, the capitals, lions' heads. These support an

elaborate architrave, deeply carved, the subjects chosen being foliage and fruit surrounding a central panel filled with a group of human figures. In another example at the Cluny, belonging to the same school, we have termini pillars, while the chimney breast is framed by two nude atlantes, slightly bent under the cornice, but showing little evidence of strain.

Belonging to an early decade, to about 1540, is the handsome carved walnut chimneypiece in the Dining Room of the Château d'Anet. It is the work of Philibert Delorme. The jambs consist of two powerfully designed armless atlantes as termini. They are bent forward, supporting on their backs the heavy entablature. In the centre is a many-quartered coat-of-arms on a diamond-shaped shield.

At Troyes itself there is, in the Grand Salle of the Hôtel de Ville, a fine example belonging to the early decades of the 17th century. It is due to J. H. Mansard, and has much in common with the Lallemand specimen, with its heavy built-up character. It is of marble, which material began to be used extensively all over Europe towards the end of the 16th century, the mode

spreading from Italy, where marbles of various kinds had been in favour some time previously. Mansard designed his chimney-piece like the *façade* of a public building, or a great commemoration monument. The fireplace was somewhat low and small. The jambs are adorned with diminishing pilasters with lion feet bases and lion head capitals. The enormous entablature with heavy mouldings has pillars supporting a substantial pediment. In the centre panel there is a medallion portrait of Louis XIV., by Girardin. It is placed under a canopy, is surrounded by trophies of flags, and rests on an inscribed tablet, the top cornice of which supports certain commemorative medals.

In the Tribunal de Commerce at Alençon there is a chimneypiece of the reign of Louis XIII. It has a wide, but low opening, with straight lintel. The jambs are decorated with falling sprays of flowers and fruit, pendant by ribbons from foliated rosettes. On the lintel there is a bulky swag of fruit and flowers, almost without a curve in its general outline, and therefore looking very stiff. The chimney breast is flanked by two caryatides as termini, the pilasters being

foliated and decorated with flowers; they have their arms uplifted and support a heavy projecting foliated frieze and cornice. The centre panel is arched, and over this is a pediment, formed by two winged figures holding a scrolled cartouche. It is somewhat clumsy in design, though good as regards finish and the treatment of detail.

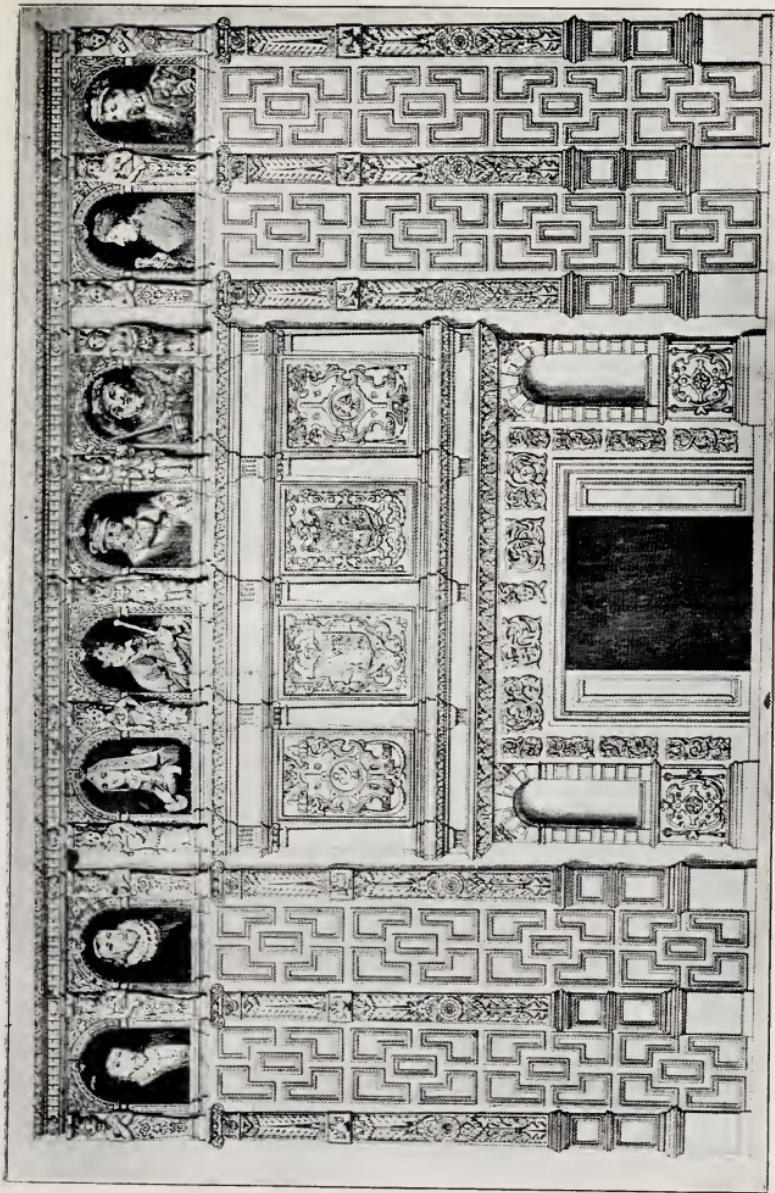
Designed much on the same lines, though more happy in its results, is the 17th century carved oak specimen at the Château de Cheverny. It is massive, of considerable projection, with large square opening, but with no attempt at providing the social chambranle hearth. The pilasters are carved with grotesque masks, and on the lintel are two female termini, human down to the waist, then foliated. The entablature, which is very massive, has four caryatides, two being placed on the front, flanking the central panel, and one each on the side walls. The central panel is framed for the reception of a picture. Over the heavily carved projecting cornice are two amorini holding a coronet. It is a well-balanced composition, as good as a whole as it is in detail.

Before taking our leave of this prolific period of French art, it is well to say that

much may be learnt from a study of examples at Fontainebleau (providing a fairly wide range), where the dimensions are usually as grandiose as the decorations, but the projections slight. Versailles also furnishes us with many subjects, as does the Louvre, which forms a good complement to the Cluny, containing many fireplaces designed for the Palace as well as others collected from elsewhere, but usually posterior to the 15th century.

With the virile, home-loving Flemings so happily self-expressive in their art, the chimneypiece early received the full attention that it deserved, and with them development in this direction was rapid and notable. Evidence of outside influence is, as might be expected from the history of the people, often apparent, though it can never be said to be overmastering, even the strongest Renaissance work being modified by local feeling and tradition. We have seen in previous chapters how rich Flanders is in both Romanesque and early Gothic specimens, and also the peculiar local development of caryatic figures, but the period covered by the 16th and 17th centuries was even more astonishingly fruitful.

We may not unjustly give pride of place in this section to the huge chimneypiece with its two wings designed for the Échevins of Bruges by Lancelot Blondel in 1529, and carved by Guyot de Beaugrand. It is to be seen, restored, in the Hôtel de Ville of that town, while a full-sized accurate model can be studied in the Castes Rooms at the Victoria and Albert Museum. It is essentially a composite construction, carried out in black Dinant marble, alabaster and carved wood, much of which is painted. It was built to commemorate the capture of Francis I. of France by the troops of the Emperor Charles V. at the battle of Pavia in 1525. The fire opening is a very wide one, about 7 feet high and 12 wide, with clustered foliated carved black columns supporting a straight lintel. This part has a considerable square projection. The lintel, in alabaster, has elaborately carved panels giving the story of Susannah and The Elders, below are clustered pillars and two pair of cherubs. Above is the carved and painted oak breast, with projecting flat canopy. This portion is more directly dedicated to Charles V., who is shown as a colossal statue in armour, holding aloft a drawn sword in his



Weston Hall, Warwickshire.

right hand, and a royal mound in his left. He is placed in a canopied throne niche in the centre of the composition, flanked by two smaller niches, with a great carved column on each side, representing the Pillars of Hercules, and symbolical of his Spanish dominions. Round about him are Gothic arched niches, with naked amorini holding up armorial shields, and a vast profusion of armorial shields, recording his many territorial dignities and family alliances. On the two ornamental pilasters enclosing the entablature are three beautifully modelled nude amorini, standing on decorated pedestals, their uplifted arms supporting commemorative medals. The two wings, which stand back on a level with the wall panelling, are also of elaborately carved and painted wood. On the left, on a level with the chimney breast, are effigies of Maximilian I., King of the Romans, and his wife, granddaughter of Charles. On the right are balancing effigies of Ferdinand of Anjou and Isabella of Castille. On both these wings there are more armorial emblems, the whole composition being knit together by the Gothic arches, tracery and foliage. The fireback is a great plate of iron, bearing the arms of

Brabant, supported by a wild man and a wild woman of the woods. It is a splendid bit of work that smacks of the barbaric, no doubt, but is certainly imposing and of great historic value. The curious iron handles pendant from the lintel should be noted, as we shall have more to say of them presently.

Dated two years later, the carved white stone chimneypiece in the Salle du Peuple, at the Hôtel de Ville, Oudenarde, is almost equally monumental and characteristic. Its jambs are composed of clustered columns, supporting lions jutting out like corbels, on which the straight lintel rests. This is carved with armorial shields. The breast is covered with Gothic geometric tracery, having foliated terminals. There are three canopied arches sheltering the Virgin, and two allegorical figures.

Others belonging to the same class may be seen at Kampen, Oudenarde, and Courtrai. That at Kampen is in the Salle des Magistrats at the Hôtel de Ville, and is by Colyn van Cameryck. The jambs are composed of a male and female termini, supporting a lintel elaborately carved in high relief, the panels, divided by small pillars,

containing figures. Over this is a shelf with cornice, consisting of three superimposed fillets, and adorned with two female figures placed on pedestals at the ends, attended by amorini. In the centre is a panel supported by two cupids, and above is a statuette of the Virgin and Child. In the hood are contrived four shallow shell niches, with pillars between each. In the centre niches are lions with armorial banners, the outer niches sheltering allegorical female figures. The pediment is in the form of a shell-covered temple, flanked by two satyrs playing on pipes. At Oudenarde the chief fireplace in the Hôtel de Ville has a carved stone kerb round the hearth. The jambs are composed of clustered columns, resting upon which are couchant lions, supporting a shelf with a double fillet cornice. The lintel proper is broad, and ornamented with three armorial shields. The chimney breast is a mass of geometric tracery with foliage, surrounding three elaborately carved niches with foliated finials, and enclosing religious figures. The lining of the fireplace is of brick, with a cast iron back. It is dated 1545. At the Hôtel de Ville of Courtrai two examples arrest attention. In the Hall of the Échevins the

chimneypiece is of carved stone, with small jambs, consisting of quite slender clustered columns, turning over at the top to form consoles, which support a straight lintel, carved with floral scrollwork, armorial shields, and two figures. On the architrave there is a mass of carving, seven panels being divided by ornamental columns. The central panel forms a larger canopied niche sheltering figures of the Virgin and Child. The six other panels, sunk, surrounded by tracery, and canopied, contain figures in canonical dress, representing bishops of neighbouring towns, each holding an armorial shield. At each angle of the shelf, standing under prominent canopies, is a figure in civilian costume. Over all is a canopy of three fan-shaped, semi-arches, with beautiful tracery work, having sculptured scriptural scenes in the pendentives. This canopy forms a support for a chimneypiece in the room above. The other example is in the Council Chamber. Here again the jambs are very slight, supporting an important lintel, but the breast, in carved oak, is one mass of decoration, designed in three tiers, each tier having figures under niches. There are three large niches on the

second tier, with Charles V. between the Infanta Isabella and a figure of Justice. Above this the niches are filled with figures representing the virtues and vices.

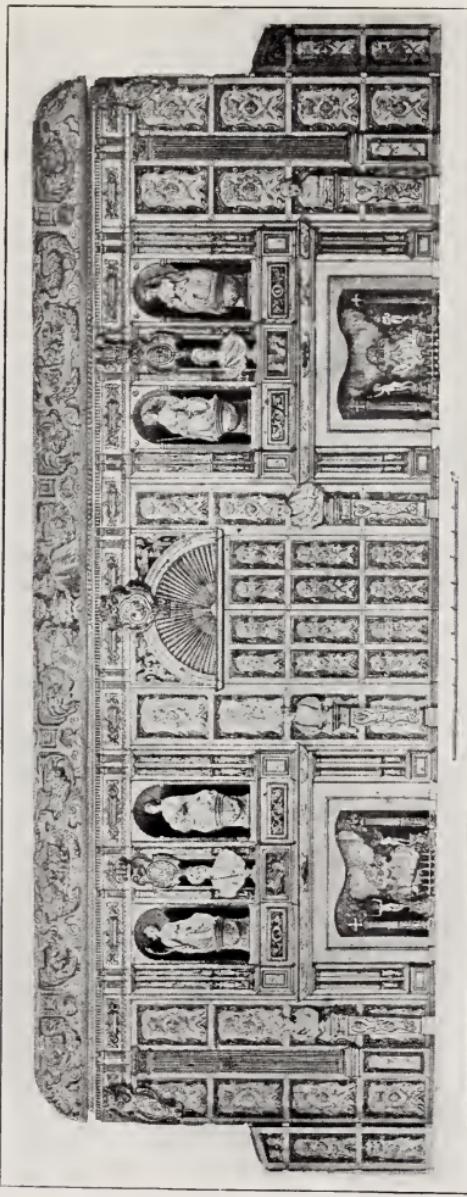
At Brussels, in private houses, and also in the Musée des Antiquités, there are many interesting specimens, but perhaps the most instructive is the very fine reconstruction to be found in the room set apart in the Hôtel de Ville for the Minister of Public Works. It is in pure Gothic style, deep recessed, the side columns highly decorated, straight lintel with floral scrollwork, the breast being flat, in three perpendicular and a top horizontal panel, all carved, flanked by two bewitching caryatides in mediæval costume. This chimneypiece has been evolved from architectural members and scraps rescued from different parts of the Town Hall during various works of remodelling and replanning, and stands a splendid model of what the truly inspired renovator may do.

A specimen of domestic Flemish work is to be seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum. It comes from Antwerp, is dated 1552, and possesses particular interest as demonstrating the happy union of various materials. The main material is black

marble, the jambs are slender red marble pillars, a red circular panel in the frieze is just over the fireplace opening, while above all is a red marble projecting cornice. The fireback is remarkable. It is composed of small glazed tiles, moulded in high relief with figure scenes, each differing, evidently designed to picture stories from the classics. In the middle, on the top line, is a larger tile embossed with the arms of the Emperor Charles V.

A quaint misconception long existed that Italian architects did not know how to design chimneypieces, and that the Peninsula had nothing to teach us in this direction. No doubt this was the result of the greater attention paid to the sunny parts of the land, and also to the decidedly unhappy references to the subject in books written by the early Italian architects. That the notion is a mistaken one observant travellers, especially in Lombardy, Piedmont, Venetia and Tuscany, know. Moreover the fine representative collection of 16th century work at South Kensington bears this out.

First on our list is that quaint Gothic example, still existing in the Casina Mirabello on the outskirts of Milan and already

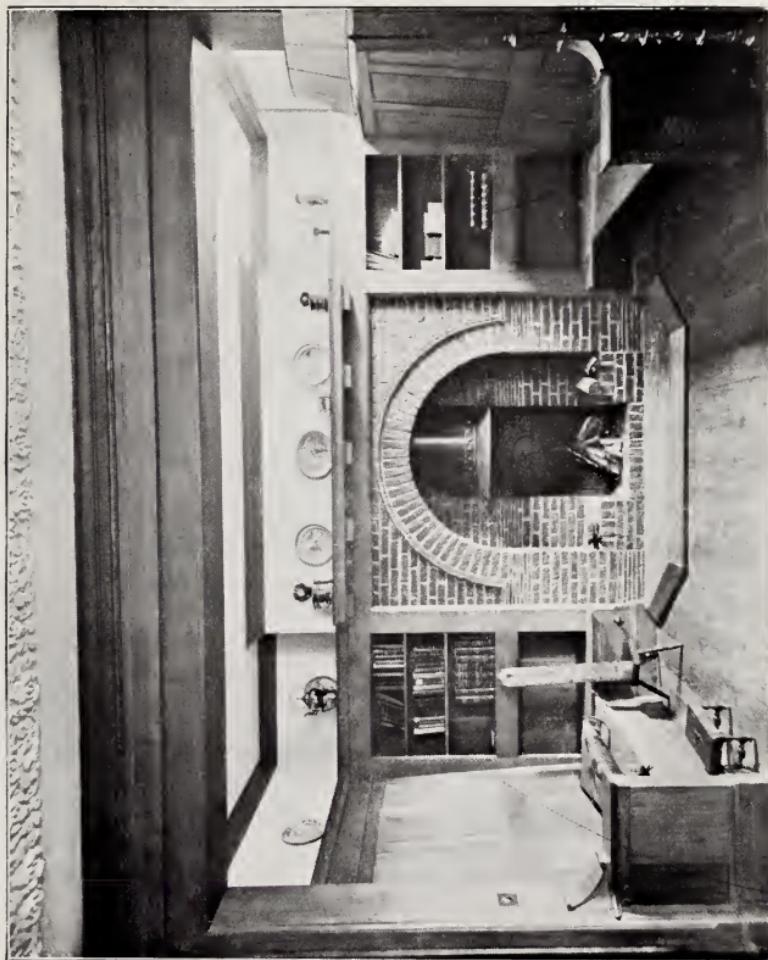


English, 17th Century, Holland House, Kensington.

described. In Milan itself there is a good example of Renaissance work with a lingering feeling of the Gothic, to be seen, much mutilated, on the ground floor of a house in the Piazza Beccaria. It is recessed, has slender columns with foliated capitals protruding in the form of consoles supporting a broad lintel, in the centre of which are two well carved figures, with an armorial shield, each supported by two figures, on both sides. There is a well carved cable cornice, and above the shelf a pointed hood. Yet another from the same city has low pillars with lions' feet, supporting kneeling nude winged and armless syrens, crushed down by the broad, heavily carved lintel. This is carved in high relief with floral scrolls, cupids, armorial symbols and a splendidly outstanding eagle in the centre. There is no hood, and the chimney breast is hidden in the thickness of the wall. So liberal are its dimensions that a modern and economical generation has contrived to build on its hearth and under its mantel two brickwork charcoal *fornacelli*, leaving space enough in the middle for an open wood fire, over which a cauldron can be slung.

Now, let us turn to the South Kensington

collection, which we can do with all the greater benefit as some of these specimens are illustrated in this book. Let us take the Florentine first. One of these is dated 1500. It is of sandstone, the front of the jambs being decorated with rather poor arabesque carvings, but the broad lintel presents excellent work, the bold floral scrolls merging quite naturally into winged monsters supporting a wreath surrounding an armorial shield. This is arabesque very nearly at its best, while the blending of the heraldic shield brings out its decorative value without incongruity. Much the same remarks may be quite fairly applied to the more sumptuous inlaid marble chimneypiece. It is white, with black panels inlaid in colours. The decorations are foliage and flowers merging into human masks. On the lintel are two formidable griffins with foliated tails, which act as supporters for a gold shield with a sable eagle. An ambitious piece in *pietra serena* has the jambs buttressed by scrolled consoles, the pilasters being decorated with chainwork. The lintel, supported by corbels, is decorated with incised work and carving in low relief. There is a closely packed circular bay leaf



Ingleneook, by Mr. P. Morley Horder.

wreath, of the Roman type, surrounding an eagle. The pediment is in the form of two scrolls with drapery, an armorial shield serving as a boss. A carved stone example of the early 16th century, ascribed to Tullio Lombardi, has a recessed fireplace. The jambs are rather fancifully outlined and decorated, supporting respectively a crouching double-tailed mermaid and a merman, bending forward as corbels sustaining the broad lintel, with projecting cornice. This lintel, front and sides, is most elaborately carved with hundreds of figures, men on horseback and on foot, dogs and game, all cut *à jour*. It is a thoroughly animated hunting scene. The projecting cornice bears a dainty leaf moulding. A carved stone example from Brescia has an atlantes and caryatides, their lower parts terminating in foliage, ornamenting the jambs, which are also decorated with incised geometric patterns, traced both on the inside and outer surfaces. Another example of this inside and outside decoration of the wing walls is seen in a carved specimen from the early part of the 16th century. Here the jambs are ornamented in front by two slender nude atlantes, standing painfully on tip-toe, their

arms supporting a flat topped hood, with arabesque and heraldically ornamented frieze. From Savona we have an example in dark slate. The heavy square jambs are carved in high relief with vases and flowers. The lintel is adorned with scrolls and two foliated figures supporting an armorial shield. It is evident that slate is not a happy medium for the carver, as it flakes badly, not wearing half so picturesquely as sandstone, or even chalk.

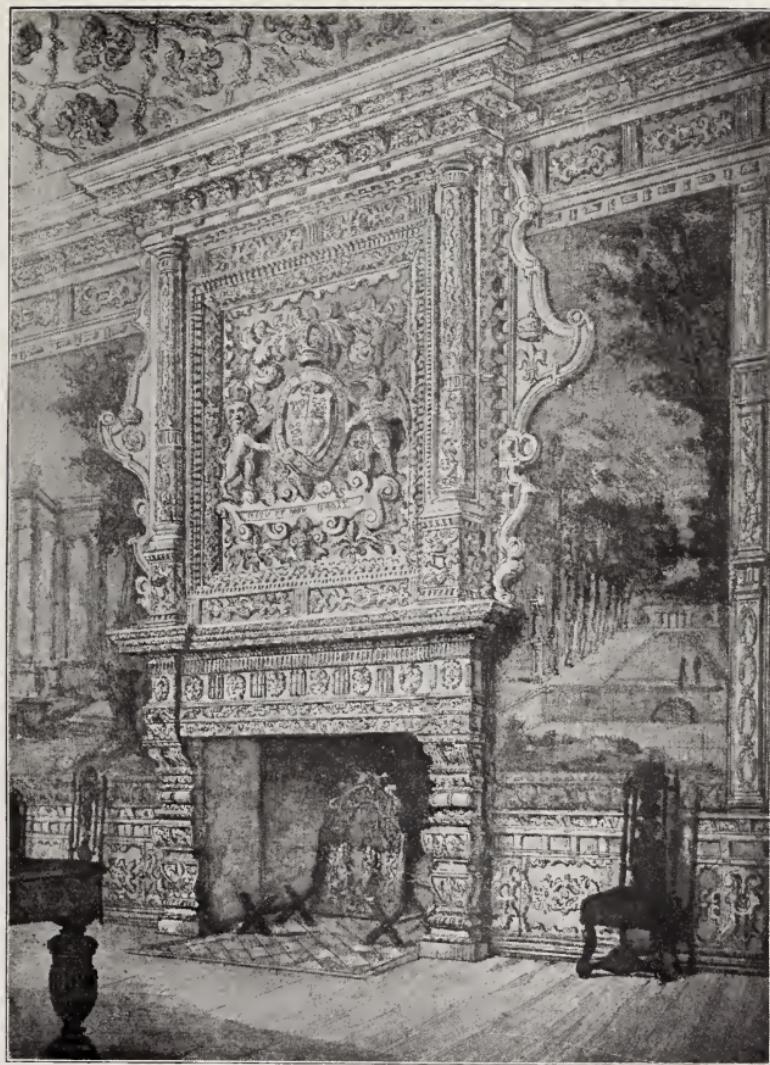
In Northern Europe the Renaissance was felt, no doubt, but as regards chimneypieces the tendency was to adhere to the Gothic hooded type or the rectangular stone. This is evident even in work at Gripsholm Castle, Sweden (1537), where we find many examples of hooded fireplaces placed in the angles of rooms, a plan reminiscent of the old, more or less turreted, type of castle construction.

CHAPTER V.

HUMAN FIGURES IN GOTHIC AND RENAISSANCE WORK.

AMONG the builders and carvers who immediately preceded the Renaissance, although frequent use was made of the human figure, this was largely for the purpose of ornamentation. If we think of examples occurring in old buildings it will be seen that, as a rule, they were intentionally and obviously decorative, having little structural meaning, fulfilling no other purpose than the breaking up of broad or tall surfaces, or the filling of nooks. It is strangely significant, as we shall presently see, that we have to make exception not only for gargoyle, whole figures or masks, but for the comparatively rare employment of kneeling or crouching figures supporting benches. In the case of ecclesiastical work these last named may be devils, squelched by, or angels put there to sustain, the good fathers.

In connection with chimneypieces we find in quite early Gothic work human figures used as capitals of pilasters or columns. We do not recollect any instance of this in England, but in Flemish work the feature appears quite frequently. This is notably so in 13th and 14th century examples. The oldest specimens show the head only; then, as in the instance in the Bruges Museum, we find head and arms, the bust merely indicated, if not, indeed, totally suppressed. They form the decoration to the corbel termination of a pillar. Then we come upon the whole figure, squatting, crushed as it were between the supporting member and the entablature, which they seemingly sustain on their backs. Next the figure emerges from this grinding position, and disports itself more or less negligently on the face of the jamb. In the Museum at Courtrai we see a chimneypiece upright adorned with a crowned and winged angel, which is dated 1372. Others at Ghent also belong to the 14th century. At Bruges a curious and seemingly purely local manifestation of sociability is to be seen in the fact that the figures adorning each jamb are in pairs, commonly man and woman side by side.



Combe Abbey, Warwickshire.

They are bent forward on the corbelling, quite free, in positions often the very antitheses of restrained. A chimney with two pairs is cited at Damme; others are to be found in houses at Bruges and in museums. The figures often bear armorial shields. This leads to the introduction of heraldic supporters, lions, birds, and mythical creatures, either as corbels or adornments thereof. One curious mixed example is to be seen in the chimneypiece in the Salle de l'Arsenal in the Hôtel de Ville at Ghent. On one jamb is a bold lion bearing a shield emblazoned with the arms of Brabant. On the opposite support is the same shield-bearing lion being fondled by a brave and fair maiden. We have here the use of three figures.

When all is said, however, this use of the human figure in Gothic structural practice has but a limited range. Quite another spirit came in with the Renaissance.

A study of the sorely mutilated remnants of the better periods of Greek and Roman architecture, but more especially of the recently unearthed, and consequently better preserved, decorative work of an over-elaborated, decadent Roman art, brought familiarity

with the idea of the decorative possibilities in the use of animal forms, more particularly human and semi-human forms, for purposes not merely of surface ornamentation, but ostensibly as integral and essential features of construction. Thus came about the introduction, or rather re-introduction of the sculptured figure, pillar or pilaster, and the surface carving and painting of grotesques.

Warrant for the use of the human figure as supporting member in architecture was certainly to be found in ancient practice.

According to the classic school both male and female figures were employed as supporting members in buildings, the former being called atlantes by the Greeks and telamones by the Romans, or later Persians; and the latter caryatides. The legend runs that the last two terms were adopted because the Greeks employed slaves as models and symbols in their architectural work. The Vitruvian version says that the Greeks, after the defeat of an aggressive alliance of Persians and Carians, took many Asiatic prisoners, and slaying the men of Carya, destroyed the city and carried off the women into captivity. Both the men and women were used as slaves, beasts of burden, and

porters, and their condition was perpetuated by their condemnation in effigy to constant hard labour. The Lacedæmonians are said to have done the same by the Persians after the battle of Platæa. Such figures are shown perfect, nude or draped, upright or kneeling.

Apart from these, however, we frequently find pilasters with architectural bases terminated by human busts or heads. These are properly called termini, even if employed as caryatides, and correspond to the terminal figures of the Romans and the Hermæ statues. The state of affairs which called down the Scriptural curse on those who removed their neighbours' landmarks, has troubled most people. The Chinese say that bournes near the estates of great men develop legs and take long journeys at night time. A similar propensity for illicit peregrination among Latin boundary stones induced Numa Pompilius to proclaim the existence of the god Terminus, who was to be venerated in the terminal stones, placed under his protection, and consequently eventually decorated with his effigy, and to remove which was desecration. By a natural transition the highway boundary stones were dedicated to Hermes, the god of travel and commerce.

Then we have a third group, known as canephori, the basket-bearers, seen as caryatides or termini, with baskets of fruit and flowers on their heads. They represent the maidens who danced before the processions in honour of Demeter, goddess of Spring and plenty, and Athene, carrying baskets full of flowers which they scattered in the pathway. These, like the fish-tailed men and women, were refinements of the atlantes type.

Of course the root idea is of very great antiquity, and is better represented by the terms atlantes and telamones, which give concrete expression to the hoary belief that the tangible world is built up by a Creative Will and by physical effort. Atlas, who sustains the weight of the world on his shoulders, is represented among other peoples by the fire-and-water snake or leviathanic monster, or the tortoise. More directly, the notion of a sustaining power received form as a monolithic stone pillar, or as a living tree. The stone pillars at the gateway and the tree columns were useful structural members, but also symbolical of the creative, virile, sustaining principle. Among the earlier gods of fertility were the tree gods, protectors of conifers, olive, date, and other fruit bearers.

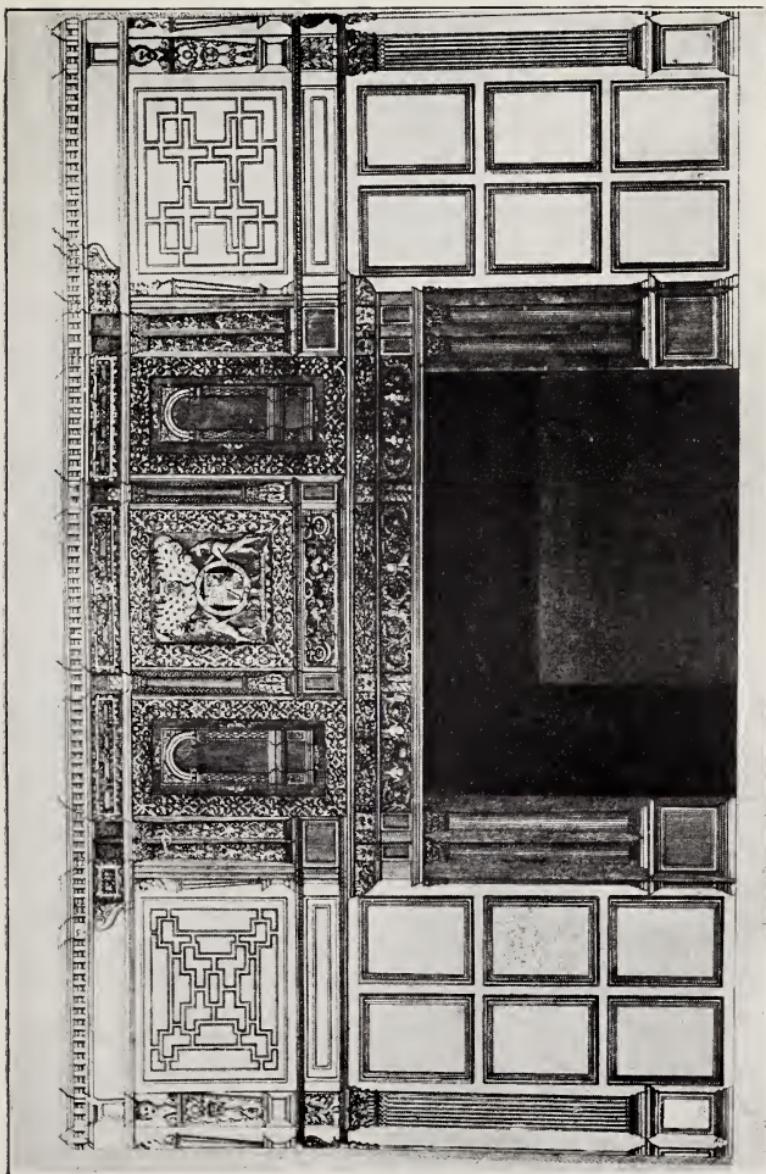
Now, the use of trees for the benefit of man entailed sacrifice, for the tree was the personification of a food and life-giving deity, to whom compensation was due. So we hear of sacrificed Osiris being confined in a tree trunk, which was afterwards employed as the pillar in a king's palace. So we hear of the blood of victims, human or otherwise, being mixed with mortar ; of sacrifices being buried under foundations of buildings ; for the blood sanctified, and the spirits of the dead hovered about as protectors. This accounts for the rude pillars, the great winged bulls of Assyria and Sphinxes of Egypt. Among the sacrificial victims were prisoners taken in warfare, who, under milder dispensations, became porters and gatekeepers.

In a like manner the boundary stone, the termini, were direct descendants of the great stones set up by primitive people to represent the gods watching over their fields. Numa Pompilius did but revive an old notion. It was quite fitting that they should have human heads, and that they should be garlanded with cereals, fruits and flowers ; for some portion of the crops were always offered to these "stocks and stones" as representatives of higher things, the un-

seen powers manifesting themselves in the fruitfulness of Spring and Autumn. Such offerings are yet made. The author has seen in Corsica small wreaths and crosses made from the straws and ears of wheat placed on prominent stones after the harvest was made, just as on the Ligurian coast olive trees are, or were until lately, blessed by the priests, and hung with chaplets.

Seeing this origin of these figures, it was appropriate that they should be designed as powerful creatures straining under the burden of sustaining entablatures and cornices, though the purely protective idea also suggested the more graceful pose pervading the creations of Greek art in its most perfect stage.

Isaac Ware, in his "Complete Body of Architecture," discussing the topic of caryatides in connection with chimneypiece design and structure, says :—" Men of a rude genius represented them as crushed and sinking under the weight, and think it a high degree of merit if they can figure in their sculpture starting eyes or bursting sinews. The Greeks detested such barbarity ; nor, I hope, are we so justly censured for a love of cruelty that such sights could please us." He quite correctly points out that the eye of spectators is



17th Century, Great Yarmouth.

attracted by figures when placed in such a situation, and he adds, "he must have a barbarous fancy who would wish to dispose them in attitudes of horror. Everything there should have an air of cheerfulness." He therefore pleads for the later Greek spirit. Ware was undoubtedly right when he held that such figures should not be treated as statues, but as parts of an order of architecture; put there, in fact, to supply the place of columns. He required that this should be done in a way that was pleasing, that should not express effort or pain. A difficult problem for the artist. Yet there was justification for this. While the Greeks made their atlantes, the Romans their telamones, colossal beings of athletic development, who appeared really to be sustaining great weights, they also took the view of people further East, that these figures were guardians, protectors. This duality of feeling appears to have come down through the Romanesque to the Gothic workers. Many of the early figures are visibly crushed between capital and cornice. Others come before us as natural growths, like the bark on a tree, without conveying an idea of strain. Far too many figures of the non-

straining character, however, are obviously mere adjuncts.

Against this we have some admirable examples of complete blending without effort. In the library of the Palace of Versailles there is a quite simply designed chimneypiece in white marble, with ormolu ornamentations. On the flat pilasters of the jambs are two termini, gracefully chubby, nude boys, merging below into acanthus leaves, their heads inclined forward, loose drapery falling from their heads over their shoulders to their waists. One has his arms folded, the other holds the drapery under his chin with one hand, while the other arm hangs negligently at his side. Both are splendidly modelled, and have pleasant smiles. In another case, in the Dauphin's bedroom, also at Versailles, there is a low chimneypiece in red and white veined marble, with wide depressed arch and ormolu decorations. At the angles of the jambs are two termini, a maiden and a youth, with nude bodies, surrounded by ribbons and garlands. Their breasts and heads bend forward, each has the outer hand on the hip, the inner arm outstretched, which give them the impression of lightness and happiness. Then we may consider Alfred Stevens' bold

solution. In his Dorchester House chimney-piece he has two figures, a maid and a youth, who are in a crouching position on each side. They belong to the design, yet are doing very little absolute work. Possibly here the wonderful sense of harmony is gained by the splendid modelling of practically nude forms, with their evidence of vigour and great dormant strength. In this way, too, he has managed to utilise the undraped figure without any incongruity for so conspicuous a position in a room for general assembly—thus satisfying the demands made both by Ware and Sir William Chambers that the unnecessary freedom of the later Renaissance should be restrained. Ware gives a picture of a chimneypiece adorned by two female figures designed by Grignon, as caryatides, one completely draped, the other only partially so, and he justly prefers the former. The artist can, indeed, put more vulgarity in partial drapery than if he adopted the purely nude.

With the master exponents of a return to classical canons and practice of art such restraint was shown, but the exuberance begotten of a too thoughtless imitation of grotesque, did not lead to excess. Folklore

and classic mythology gave warrant for certain extravagances. We have explained the architectural and foliated terminations of pilaster and pillar figures. But beyond this there were half-human, beast, or half-fish figures, and, even more strange, the human figure merging into the vegetable. This is merely a rendering of such truth as underlay the worship of trees. Osiris, we saw, was identified after death, before his coming back to life, with the date palm trunk. River gods rose out of rushes, sylvan deities and sprites faded into trees and bushes. We have only to study the beautiful renderings of old Greek tales by Bartolommeo Pinelli to realise this feeling of the Renaissance workers. Daphne flying from Apollo, her arms uplifted to heaven, takes root as a tree, her fingers sprout into branches. In another plate we see Cyparisso being transformed into a cypress, his body has become half a rugged trunk, one hand is pressed to the head, the other, uplifted, has become a branch thick with the dark green leaves. It was such tales as these that furnished motives to the carver, and the Gothic root in a population mainly of forest-dwellers gave rise to other extravagances.

The pity lay in the fact that folklore, when it became a mere legend, a weird tale, lost its spiritual influence, but held the artistic imagination ; so situations and types become stereotyped and then degenerate. Fancy without reverence at its back was given a free hand, monstrosities growing apace without much rhyme or reason. As regards fireplace ornamentation, this is seen largely in the third and fourth generation of Renaissance workers by the excessive use of fauns, satyrs, and the employment of incongruous adjuncts.

It was at this stage of development that the canephori proved dangerously attractive to the carver. These female figures, often graceful enough in themselves, even when treated as termini as they frequently were, unfortunately had very small baskets of flowers placed on their heads, crushed under the cornice or shelves, which was decidedly ugly as well as absurd. With these figures, perhaps more than with any others, freedom combined with inevitableness are necessary to success in design.

In England the Tudor period was rather unhappy in this respect. While the caryatides and atlantes were but sparingly utilised,

termini swarmed in most specimens. In single chimneypieces one may have two, or a couple of pairs of termini adorning the jambs, two more on a large scale framing the overmantel, while smaller ones are stuck on every pilaster dividing the many panels. Too often these are, as we said, a meaningless excrescence, not a natural growth of the design or particular member. They are, also, usually heavy, uncouth in execution as well as ugly in design, the satyr type prevailing. The terminals, too, are over-decorated with geometrical and strapwork tracery, over which is superadded floral wreaths.

In later, more direct return to an earlier and better period of classic art, a severer type of pillar figures was adopted. We come to the chaste nudities of a Primaticcio, the elegancies of a Caffieri, but also to quite happy, rather naughty, but certainly interloping cherubs of Grinling Gibbons, sporting, no one knows why, amidst the flowers and fruits which hang, equally without the keynote of inevitableness, over and on the sides of fireplaces. This phase was quite as bad as the lavish peppering of small high relief carved figures or little statuettes of the previous generations.

In these days we do not bother much about figures in the designing of our chimney-pieces, but when we do, it is to the ideas of a Primaticcio, of a Caffieri, of a Pilon, or an Alfred Stevens, that we should give heed.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TUDOR PERIOD.

IN architecture the Tudor period covers a wide space of time and many varieties, though it possesses a well defined general character. In its earlier stages, which may, indeed, be traced as far back as the middle of the 15th century—for like “Gothic” the term is merely a convenient label, invented “after the event” rather to describe a tendency than a bare chronological fact—it was a softening of the ruder forms of the prevailing style in order to secure domestic comfort. We may see in it the result of an intellectual as well as a material revolution, an awakening, for it marked the rapid decadence of feudalism, the spreading of the base of social stability as a result of the growth of the city, the rise of the petty gentry and the greater prosperity among the yeomanry.



Dining Room, Loseley, near Guildford.

Few things are at once so amusing and so instructive as to watch the struggles of the heads of one social layer to attach themselves to the tail of a higher one. Wherever and whenever this tendency is most active, then and there will intellectual effort be most active, there and then will come material prosperity, and there and then will the existence of a really exclusive aristocracy become more difficult. The Tudor spirit marked just such a restless stirring. In architecture the baronial castle had become an anachronism, the rustic building and narrow town rabbit-warren impossibilities to men who felt themselves members of a commonwealth. The Tudor style with its richness, variety, occasional vulgarities, but at bottom solid and sensible, admirably represented this evolution; we stand aside and witness a flattening out of the Gothic as applied to domestic requirements. It was a spontaneous growth, touched by just that leaning to heterogeneity one might look for from a conglomerate people with so strong an assimilative power as the English.

With reference to the spread of comfort in the matter of buildings, we may cite the oft-quoted passage from Harrison's view of

England prefacing Holinshed's *Chronicles*. He is writing of the early decades of the 16th century and says:—"There are old men yet dwelling in the village where I remaine which have noted three things to be marvellously altered in England within their sound remembrance; other three things too too much increased. One is the multitude of chimnies laterlie erected, whereas in their young daies there were not above two or three, if so manie, in most uplandish townes of the realme (the religious houses and manour places of their lords alwaies excepted, and peradventure some great personages) but ech one made his fire against a reredosse in the hall, where he dined and dressed his meat."

It is to be remembered that he is referring to chimneys, not fireplaces; for the latter did not always connote the former, and his notable exceptions must not be overlooked. But there we have a just enough measure of the prevailing degree of domestic comfort. New houses, however, were being built, and above all they were being better equipped, not least with good fireplaces and proper chimneys.

As for the flattening out process, this was

promptly and vigorously applied to chimney-pieces. Far projecting, draught-compelling hoods were discarded. Hearths were recessed well into the walls, for better chimneys made drawing easier; while, plastering and panelling becoming general, there was the less need for the cosy fireplace roomlet within a hall. By flattening the jambs and chimney breasts more space was secured, as well as greater harmony with other decorative features. Yet the fireplace lost nothing of its importance or dignity, indeed its ornamentation received a fresh impetus and grew apace.

Presently the Renaissance influence was felt, though it was slow in coming to us. It was received rather with condescension than with open arms, certain of the features of the new art being adapted to our own style. Not unnaturally it was the richness and grotesqueness of arabesques that attracted, rather than the severer beauty of the Greek and Roman orders. The arabesque was, after all, allied to a certain lighter side of Gothic, and so an exuberance of grotesqueness grew up, tawdry and meaningless enough, but perhaps in closer touch with Nature and more wholesome than the ex-

acerbated imaginings of the decadent schools on the Continent. In connection with chimneypiece adornment, the well-proportioned column with base and capital had less attraction than the pilaster, often of the diminishing type, its face scarred with somewhat superfluous scrollwork. The grace of caryatides and power of atlantes were apt to be passed over in favour of the termini, which lent themselves to grotesque treatment, and somehow or other appeared to blend with the geometric flat ribbon or strap type of decoration. This strapwork, which was a legacy derived in the first instance from Celtic sources, from the pargetters and so handsomely developed by the plasterers, entered largely into the designs of carvers both of stone and wood.

At the first stages of the style under consideration stone was in general request. It was part of the tradition. Then, towards the middle of the 16th century, no doubt as a result of panelling walls, wood came into favour, sometimes for the whole visible parts of the structure, at other times merely for the architrave; while much later there was a lining of stone, thin jambs, and light lintel, entirely framed with carved wood. Plaster

was also sometimes called into service, though this was nearly always in combination with wood employed in the entablature, the fireplace frame itself being of stone.

Here and there the old simplicity of outline and treatment of surfaces persisted ; for instance in passage galleries, as in some parts of Windsor Castle, in domestic offices, as in the kitchens in Hampton Court Palace. As a rule, however, all surfaces, whether flat or round, received lavish decoration. This was the case with pillars and pilasters, but we do not find the geometrical mouldings themselves charged with running floral sprigs as in ceiling and mural plasterwork of the same period.

This over-elaboration, which, as we have acknowledged, often sounded a note of vulgarity, was to produce a reaction. John Britton, who was not an admirer of the period, writing about the Queen Elizabeth fireplace in Windsor Castle, speaks with contempt of "the shell-roofed niche, grotesque pilasters with caryatides, etc., columns having lower parts covered with foliage, and upper parts fluted, with a jumbled mixture of cherubims, birds and lions' heads, armorial bearings, mythological hieroglyphics, etc.,"

which "composed the heterogeneous designs for the chimneypiece." The particular example, no doubt, was not the happiest of the kind, though it has its merits, and certainly the general condemnation is far too sweeping. This very piece is reproduced by Pugin among his typical Gothic work, and it is amusing to contrast his appreciation with the tempestuous diatribe of the earlier scribe. According to the great Gothic revivalist, it is "impossible to deny the grand effect of this elaborate composition, though nothing could be more misapplied than the Doric triglyphs and Ionic columns which appear amongst the principal features. The most striking fault was committed in placing two such little spindling pilasters under the huge mass of ponderous ornaments. We know that they really have nothing to support, but to the eye they appear loaded with the whole work." This use of the spindling pilaster, however, was quite characteristic of the classic irruption into Tudor Gothic, and must be accepted as a vital symbol of a real mental twist, showing itself in that love of attitudinising which we see even in an Elizabeth or a Raleigh, that willingness to place the satyric on a decked-out pedestal,

not only in literature and art, but in actual practice, as we see differently expressed by Henri of Navarre and the eighth Henry of England. The chimneypiece immediately under review is a huge affair, the fireplace opening being 6 feet 5 inches, while the lower part and entablature towers up over ten feet. The decoration is largely heraldic, with strapwork background, the crowned falcon of Anne Boleyn appearing on the pedestal of the upper order, the falcon, heraldic tiger, the de Bohun swan, the Tudor Red Dragon of Wales in the metope of the Doric frieze. Elaborate carvings appear on the bases of the columns, and the pilasters, wondrously spindled and outlined, with lions' heads, drapery, and bunches of vegetation, are thoroughly unclassical—Renaissance run mad. But there is the ground-plan soberness of the splendid strapwork, and the vigorous handling of all carved decoration.

As an antidote to this we may describe, though rather out of their chronological order, the specimens already referred to as existing at Windsor and Hampton Court. In the former place we have in one of the galleries two charmingly unobtrusive fire-

places, attributed to the reign of Henry VIII. The stone jambs and lintels, with plain mouldings, are flush with the walls, the lintels being in the form of slightly pointed arches, or straight and crenelated, marked, as we have said, with plain mouldings. In the small pendentives thus formed are floral sprigs. The mouldings and scroll-work differ in each case, though the general outlines are identical, and remind one of the beautiful Gothic work of the same approximate date in St. George's Chapel. At Hampton Court, in the older part of the Palace, are huge kitchens, assigned to Cardinal Wolsey's time. Here are to be seen huge fireplaces, recessed in the thick walls, with upward sloping backs, and outlined by great blocks of dressed stone. The openings are very wide, with short straight jambs, supporting slightly pointed arches. In one case there is a large upright keystone. The stone arches are outlined by a course of bricks placed on end. This is the persistent monastic type, already met with in the Durham Convent kitchen.

We will pass on to the consideration of other typical examples, mostly to be found in the positions where they were originally



Haddon Hall, Derbyshire.

erected. Of some of these we give illustrations.

Our first example is from Weston Hall, Warwickshire, and is dated 1545. It is a great structure, 13 feet 6 inches high, of carved oak. The jambs are tapering Ionic pilasters, moderately carved, supporting an elaborate entablature. The frieze is supported by long, tapering Ionic pilasters, placed on high pedestals. These pilasters are carved with foliated ornaments and the family crest—a sheldrake. The frieze, which is divided up into arched panels by a series of small caryatides supporting a continued cornice, is adorned with portraits of courtiers of Henry VIII. Over the lintel are two recessed arched niches and an armorial shield. The general design is classic, but the detailed decoration distinctly Tudor. The fireplace furniture belongs to a much later date.

This use of armorial insignia and of portraits connecting the owner with his particular duties in life are quite characteristic of the age, and show the important position occupied by fireplaces in the social economy of the time. Many of these “storied” chimneypieces have a genealogical or personal interest, in a more intimate

fashion than the royal examples already described, and even than those having an armorial shield or two in prominent parts. They have something more personal to show ; in a humbler fashion they may be compared to that at Bruges, which tells its tale in an inimitably grand way.

These "storied" chimneypieces form quite a delightful class. Take, for instance, that celebrated one at Speke Hall, belonging to the year 1564. The overmantel is broad, but rather low, and divided into panels by dainty carved pilasters. On the frieze painted canvas was stretched, giving the pedigree of the Norris family. In the centre panel a family party was rudely carved. William Norris and his two wives (as a matter of fact he married them successively in the orthodox fashion) sat behind a table, while their nineteen children stand in front. Other figures were carved on the side panels. Then at Barlborough, Derbyshire, we find a handsomely carved stone chimneypiece, having coupled Corinthian columns with fluted shafts supporting the lintel ; above are two richly carved pedestals on which stand two caryatides, one representing Justice. Now the owner, Rodes, was a Justice of the

Common Pleas. Three shields bear respectively his own arms and those of his two wives.

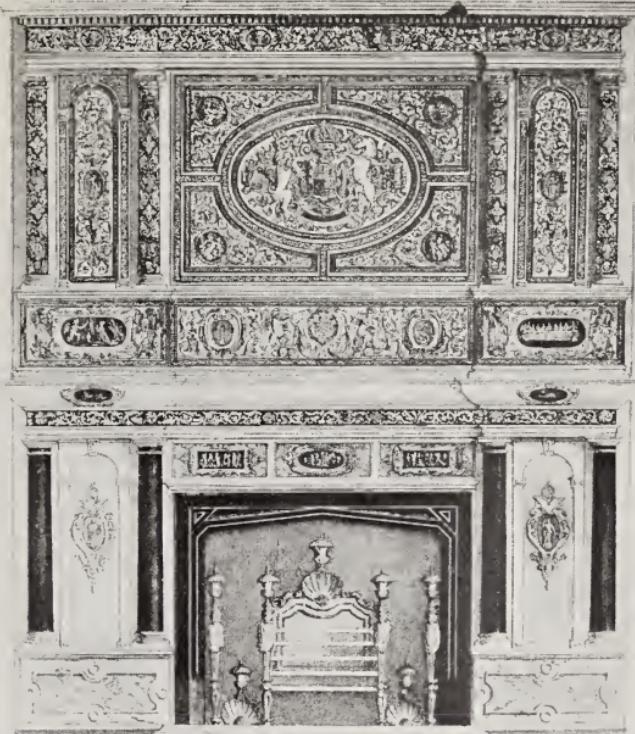
Of the heraldic variety we have a good example at Haddon Hall, Derbyshire. It is in the Great Hall, and specially designed to impress visitors. The arms of the builder, Bess of Hardwick, Countess of Shrewsbury, appear in a lozenge, crowned with a coronet and supported by two rampant greyhounds. Curiously enough, in spite of the shield being ensigned with the Countess's coronet, the bearings are her paternal arms, which piece of heraldic incongruity is quite characteristic of that vigorous dame. The arms are a beautiful piece of work, strongly carved. Unfortunately, the blending with the surrounding is not so happy as is usually the case with Tudor treatment. The drapery on the outside scroll with small medallions, and the small swags with pendant fruit in the frieze, distract the attention, though the use of the cartouche is excellent. In the same house there is another colossal structure about 18 ft. high by 12 ft. wide. It is of white and coloured marbles, rather severely treated, there being little ornament except the circular frame and statue in the centre of the overmantel.

In the old Manor House, Sheffield, there was formerly a room, locally supposed to have been a prison for Mary Queen of Scots, with a richly moulded plaster ceiling and frieze. The chimneypiece reached from floor to ceiling, and was almost flush with the wall. The hearth was raised ; the jambs of stone, slightly chamfered, the heavy lintel with moulded edge being supported by an arch, the pendentives filled with foliage. Above this were two handsome Corinthian columns, with bases, plain shafts, and acanthus capitals. The whole panel between was occupied by a coroneted coat-of-arms between two supporters. Precisely the same treatment is seen in the huge specimen in the picture gallery at Cobham Hall, near Rochester. The fireplace is framed by two termini, but the upper part is monopolised by the large, boldly carved coat-of-arms, coroneted, with two supporters and surrounded by splendidly flowing lambrequin. In the drawing-room at Glamis Castle there is a very large carved stone fireplace. The jambs are straight pilasters, panelled, having raised mouldings with strong capitals, and are carried up to the rounded and projecting, richly carved frieze. The lintel is in two

tiers, straight and quite plain, divided by a heavy projecting moulding. The chimney breast consists of a panel decorated with foliage and flowers, all springing from two straight stems placed between two pairs of termini, with diminishing pilasters, the flutings *en gaine*, standing on carved pedestals. In the centre there is a coat-of-arms with a richly decorated frame. The whole construction has very little projection. A charming feature is that adjoining the fireplace is a deep alcove, with raised floor, and large window.

At Barsall, Sussex, we have a deeply recessed fireplace, the chimneypiece, though boldly carved, having hardly any projection. The jambs and lintel, which are flat and decorated with panels, are of stone, the surround and overmantel of carved wood. This framing consists of two slender pillars on each side, standing one on the top of the other on small bases reaching to the ceiling cornice. These columns are fluted and decorated. The overmantel is divided into three panels by pilasters covered with scroll-work, these panels being filled with armorial shields. Between these and the lintel is a panelled frieze in dainty inlaid woodwork.

Two interesting examples of the use of plaster are to be seen respectively at Little Moreton Hall, Chester, and at Plas Mawr, Conway. In the former case the fireplace is deeply recessed, and is framed with carved walnut pilasters, with foliated capitals; the lintel frieze is also decorated with foliage conventionally treated. Above this is a shelf with elaborate mouldings, supporting two crudely moulded plaster figures of Justice and Science, standing on pedestals. The central panel, with egg moulding, contains a quartered shield surrounded by lambrequin. The frieze and cornice are well moulded and highly decorated. At Plas Mawr the fireplace in the entrance hall is surrounded by a stone framing, the broad, straight lintel being composed of large stones, curiously joggled, the stones being cut alternately with two large semi-circular swellings at the sides, and with two corresponding depressions. It gives the impression of a balustrade. The overmantel in plaster is of a particularly elaborate character. There are six quite graceful termini, five coats-of-arms, a lion, and a crowned *fleur de lis*, besides floral decorations. In the drawing-room above a similarly rude stone framing is some fine



Governor's Parlour, Charterhouse, London.

plasterwork, the centre panel being framed by two termini supporting a carved cornice. The panel contains, moulded in plaster, a Tudor rose within a Garter, and the letters E.R. The details of the plasterwork blend with the similar treatment of the walls. In Queen Elizabeth's Room we see a stone fireplace with little moulding and hardly any projection, and above the lintel a projecting chimney breast of plain plaster carried straight up to the ceiling. These are dated 1580.

At Wroxhall Manor House, Wiltshire, there is an elaborately carved stone fireplace of Renaissance design. It has two pairs of female termini, nude to the waist. On the architrave are niches sheltering small allegorical figures.

At Loseley Hall, near Guildford, we have a remarkable carved stone specimen, where the struggle between the Gothic and Renaissance is rather two apparent. It belongs to the year 1562, is in the dining-room, and is 13 ft. 6 in. high and proportionately broad, though with but small projection. The jambs are decorated with lions' masks, with swags of flowers and leaves in their mouths. These are flanked by

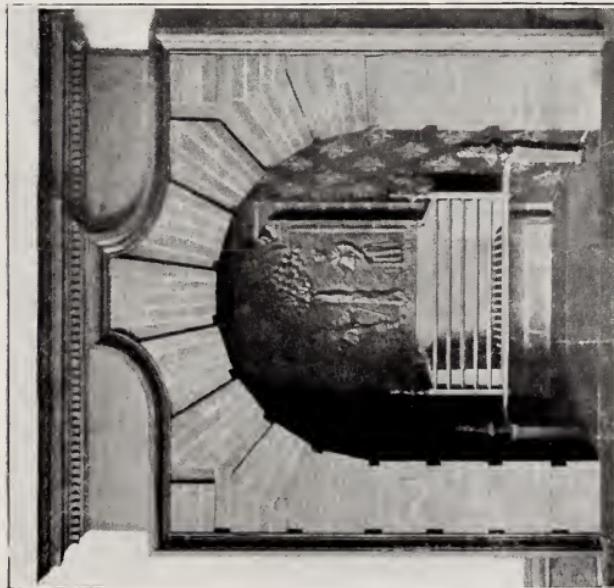
coupled Corinthian columns, with acanthus capitals.

Shaw gives particulars of an oak chimney-piece that existed in the drawing-room of a house built in 1596 on the Yarmouth Quay. It was well designed, simple in outline, but with elaborately carved decorations. Coupled Corinthian columns supported the lintel and shelf, and above these were termini, ending in foliage, supporting classic ornaments symbolising Commerce and Plenty. The caduceus of Mercury is cleverly combined with cornucopias in such a way as to form an anchor. The upper part was divided into three compartments, surmounted by a frieze and cornice. At a later period the central panel was filled with a well designed coat-of-arms of James I., carved in high relief.

A more ornate structure was put up at Combe Abbey, Warwickshire, tradition says by Lord Harrington when he was about to receive the Princess Elizabeth under guardianship. It is a rectangular construction, of fair projection, reaching from floor to ceiling, broad and with liberal square opening. Though the classic influence is seen especially in details of the architrave, the lower columns are of the



Fireplace on Landing, by Mr. A. Winter Rose.



Brick and Woodwork, by Mr. Cecil Burns.

fancy shaped, diminishing order, much decorated, while the whole is covered with broad strapwork. In the centre panels are the arms of Henry VIII., with the Red Dragon of Wales as one of the supporters, carved on a big scale in high relief.

An equally marked duality is seen in the Great Gallery at Burton Agnes, Yorkshire. The chimneypiece, which measures about 7 ft. by 5 ft., has a deeply recessed fireplace framed with carved stone, surrounded and topped by carved wood. The handsome frieze is supported by well formed pilasters, and above them are canephori, the baskets of fruit, flowers and leaves being unusually well proportioned, placed under a projecting cornice. The panels are carved with figures of Honour, Faith, Hope, Charity, and Pandora, surrounded by floral scrolls. It should be mentioned that this example stands in a gallery 115 ft. by 23 ft., high in proportion, with a semi-circular ceiling, the whole decorated with six series of scrolls, in the form of rose branches with large leaves and blossoms.

The same feeling is noticeable in the great chimneypiece in King William's Room at Castle Ashby, Northampton. The fireplace

has a slight carved stone surround, the lintel bearing the arms and crest of the owner. Framing this is a carved oak overmantel, designed in two tiers, each having three niches sheltering figures of Pandora, Justice, Temperance, Faith, Hope, and Charity. The panels are carved *en cartouche recourbée*. In the panelled hall of the same mansion there is another big fireplace, with quite plain slender marble jambs and lintel, and an elaborate carved oak surround, with two termini supporting a shelf, above which are niches with Corinthian columns and shell backs, sheltering two statuettes. The central panel is filled with arabesques, and we also see an armorial shield.

At the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a chimney piece of the Elizabethan era brought from Great St. Helens, City. The overmantel has panels with heavy raised mouldings, and three carefully proportioned Corinthian columns. Another carved stone and oak specimen from Enfield is to be noted.

Harrison's reference to chimneys in England at the opening of the 16th century has been quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Although it is really outside the scope of

this book to discuss the subject (one fully deserving a small monograph), it is impossible to neglect the matter altogether. We are still sadly oppressed by the tyranny of the hideous 19th century chimneypot, ugly in its nakedness, hideous when cowled; we have every reason to look back with appreciation if not with envy some 300 years or more. The treatment of the chimney shaft, stack and top, is thoroughly typical of the period and nation; it is the outward manifestation of combining decoration with solid comfort that we see in the design and execution of the chimneypiece. They were usually built of red brick, of fine dimensions, boldly carried up, never shamefacedly masked, for they were things of utility beautified. Their number on the roofs of large Manor Houses is astonishing, only less so than the easy variety shown. At Compton Wynyates, built in the second year of Henry VIII., and at Hampton Court Palace, we see a great many, standing out boldly, and each one differently treated. At Hampton Court the decorations are geometrical; the bodies of the tops, under projecting cornices, are masses of tracery carried out in carved bricks—squares, diamonds, lozenges, zig-zags

and wavy lines. At East Barsham the great brick chimneys are decorated heraldically, lions rampant on one, *fleur de lis* on another in a trelliswork of crossed lines, all carved out of brick. The tops are circular, square, octagonal, but are all treated as not inconsiderable parts of a building. Occasionally we see such daring eccentricities as at Aston Bury, with its great stacks placed on each side, and towering above, a gabled end pierced by a dormer window. At Great Cressingham Manor House, Norfolk, we find the huge solid stacks springing from the ground floor, the octagonal sides ornamented with recessed niches with multi-foil arches, and ending in twin octagonal decorated tops. This outstanding boldness is all the more curious because with the chimneypiece itself the tendency was to reduce projection as much as possible without abandoning monumental treatment, but it demonstrates how practical utility was the guiding principle of the Tudor builders.

CHAPTER VII.

THE JACOBEAN.

THE Jacobean is really an extension of the Tudor style, but more decidedly marked by the Renaissance movement, and betraying something of Flemish influence. There are no signs of falling off in the attention paid to fireplaces. We have numerous splendid examples existing.

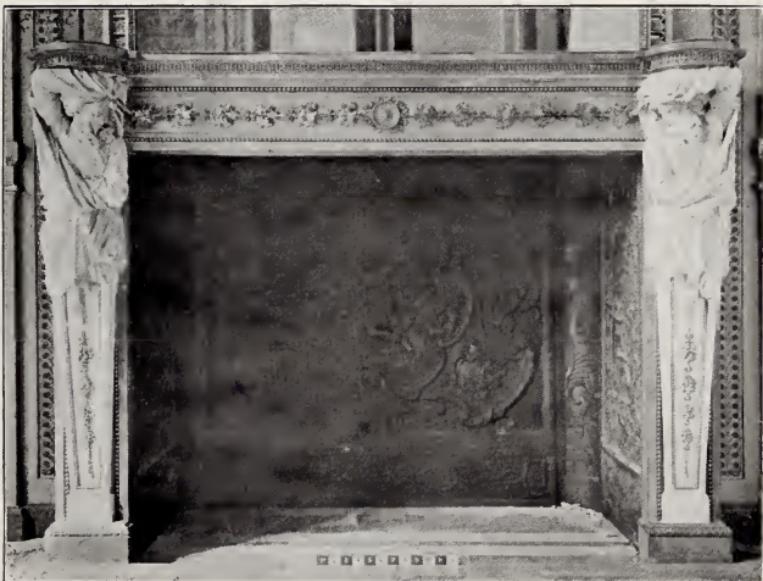
It is perhaps fitting to begin our descriptions with Hatfield House, the magnificent Hertfordshire seat of the Cecils. There are quite a large number here, but we will content ourselves with giving details of three typical examples of a transition style. In the Marble Dining Hall the chimneypiece is of carved oak, has a fair projection and stands about 14 ft. high. It has termini pilasters, with fan-shaped niches, and the decoration is mostly broad strapwork of the

best Tudor period. In the Drawing Room we have a grand monument in marble, with quite moderate projection for so large a structure. It is mainly white, with black classic columns, and red and white panels. Over a broad shelf there is a deep niche, in which stands a life-size bronze statue of James I. in regal robes. There is a rather heavy pediment with two medallion portraits. In the Library there is a somewhat severe white marble chimneypiece, in two tiers, with black classic columns, and coloured marble panels. In the centre of the breast there is a large panel containing a portrait of Sir Robert Cecil, builder of Hatfield, in coloured mosaic. Another monumental example in white and coloured marble is to be found in the Long Gallery.

Marble of different colours is again used in the case of the immense chimneypiece in the drawing-room at Bramshill House, dating back to 1603, but here we have an admixture of oak panels, plain, except for the strong mouldings, and also oak ribs. The lower portion is Doric, the upper Ionic. The classic rather than the Renaissance is the strong influence in this instance. Although the entablature is heavy and in rather too



English 17th Century from Norwich.



French 18th Century Marble and Ormoulu.

great a contrast to the lower part, it harmonises well with the wall panelling and the very elaborate plaster moulded ceiling.

In the carved oak specimen in the dining-room at Blickling Hall, Norfolk, the later Renaissance influence is apparent, although the decoration is largely heraldic in character. Nevertheless, thanks mainly to the freely foliated character of the flowing lambrequin, and to the unusually floral treatment of the shields, there is quite a good blending with the neo-classic details, and in this respect it is a creditable and instructive specimen.

Holland House, Kensington, appears to have been designed by John Thorpe, the builder of Kirby Hall, Northants, but Sir Walter Cope only set about the erection in 1606, and most of the internal decorations belong to a later date, being carried out by his son-in-law, Henry Rich, Earl of Holland, who employed Francis Cleyn among others. Several of the chimneypieces are worthy of note. In the Gilt Room there are two chimneypieces, said to be the work of Cleyn, placed on each side of a doorway and almost flush with the other wall decorations. The jambs consist of coupled columns painted

black, resting on blue pedestals, the bases and capitals being gilt. These support a narrow lintel and shelf. Above these are coupled columns of Siena marble, also with gilt ornaments on lower part of shafts, bases and capitals. The more prominent mouldings and flutings are also gilt. The *cima recta* of the great entablature is decorated with leaves and golden acorns. Much of the ornamentation is in gold, shaded with bistre, and is placed on dark blue grounds. On the left chimneypiece are the arms of Charles I. and over the right those of the Prince of Wales. Other heraldic ornaments are the cross-crosslets and *fleur de lis* of the Copes and Riches. In the Great Room we see two tall Corinthian columns, with gilt bases and capitals flanking the fireplace and supporting respectively the cross-crosslets of the Copes and the *fleur de lis* of the Riches. In the Yellow Drawing Room and the Blue Room the designs are again classical, the colourings being respectively sea green with pink and gold and neutral tint embellishments, and white and gold with medallions in neutral tints. In the Ancient Parlour we have a chimneypiece that may possibly be due to the pencil of Thorpe, for it is thor-

oughly in the Tudor spirit. Here there is considerable projection, though the fireplace is also recessed. The structure is carried up rectangularly from floor to ceiling. The jambs are flat pilasters, ornamented with strapwork. The entablature consists of panels with raised mouldings, flanked by Corinthian columns supporting an enriched frieze and projecting cornice.

A drawing has come down to us of a fireplace in the Duke's House, Bradford, Wiltshire, which was erected by the Duke of Kingston in the reign of James I. It was recessed, with upward slanting back and square opening, the lintel very broad, with coupled Corinthian columns, supporting a good frieze and projecting cornice. Over this were a pair of coupled columns, with well formed capitals supporting a projecting cornice. On the central panel was an elaborately carved frame enclosing an armorial shield.

In the Victoria and Albert Museum we have several specimens of this period, whose peculiar interest lies in the combination of stone and wood; stone jambs and lintels,

generally very slender, usually with plain mouldings framing the fireplaces, with carved oak overmantels. One of these, dated 1606, has a rather broad lintel decorated with birds, beasts, and flowers. The carved oak overmantel, supported by fancifully modelled diminishing pilasters, with diminutive caryatid busts, has, on a central panel, between Ionic columns, the arms of James I., with a shell-backed niche on each side and a scroll-work pediment. The raised strapwork on the carved base just above the lintel is excellent. In a pair brought from Lime Street, and dated 1620, the lower part of stone, the jambs and lintels are slender and quite plain, but the oak overmantels have panels with good raised mouldings and overhanging cornices.

With the advance of the century the increasing influence of classic design made itself felt. Inigo Jones was at work, and his taste was nearer ancient art than the later exponents of the Renaissance. He designed many chimneypieces, both the simple and the continued classes, that is those merely forming a frame to the fireplace, and having concealed breasts, and those with a superstructure or overmantel.

It will be seen from the pictures of his work which we give that he did not care for over-emphasis. His chimneypieces were moderate in size, having slight projection, square openings, and fairly pure classic members. He preferred the pilaster to the pillar, at all events for the jambs, this mainly to secure his flat panel effects. The fanciful shaping and decoration of the Tudor era was discarded in favour of plain mouldings or flutings, lions' masks, and reasonable slender swag-garlands and sprays. He was fond of the running line patterns, undulating and voluted wave forms. Keeping well in mind the laws of proportion guiding classic builders (but not in the matter of chimneypieces), Jones restricted breadth as well as projection. Many of his examples, especially of the continued class, have the appearance to English eyes of being skimpy, and when the favourite well developed pediment was employed, even top-heavy. Where perhaps he excelled was in keeping the decoration down in harmony with the severity of his general outlines. For this reason his simple fireplaces are more satisfying than his continued chimneypieces, as they were a comprehensible way of treating a problem of utility, and allowed

plenty of freedom for mural decoration. On the other hand, the continued treatment raised expectations which are not satisfied, as they were by the Gothic or the Tudor styles.

CHAPTER VIII.

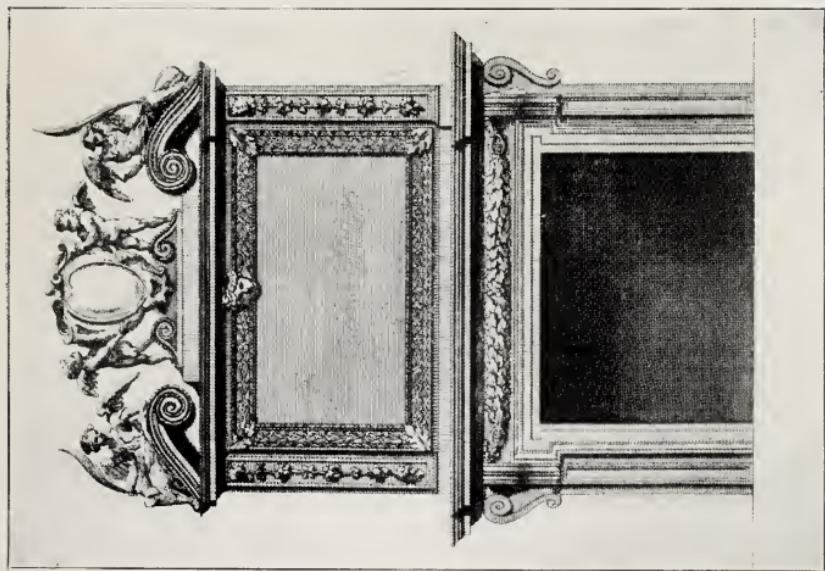
LATER RENAISSANCE.

ON the whole, the Renaissance movement in the hands of men of the 16th and 17th centuries resulted, so far as our immediate interest is concerned, in a decided incoherence of design and incongruity of decoration. On the Continent this early led to a mingling of materials, partly in order to secure polychromatic effects, but chiefly as a direct outcome of that exuberance of ornamentation already noted. With us the influences at work abroad were slower to make themselves felt, and perhaps our incoherence never quite reached the licence it did with our masters. But while we retained some degree of soberness, we failed to catch the lightness, the elegance, that we find in French and Italian work. A French chimneypiece of the 17th century is suggestive of masks, powder puffs,

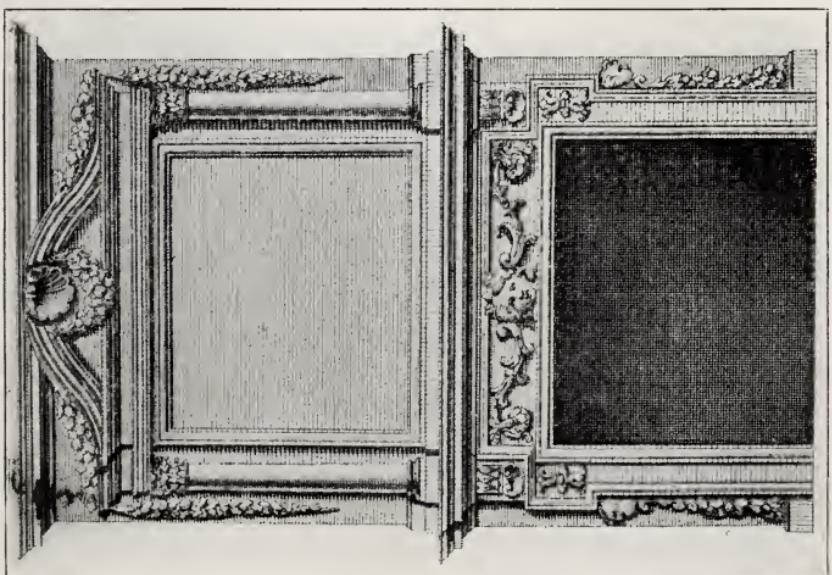
and alcoves. In a word, it is rather pretentious, often decidedly naughty, but always interesting and amusing. Those of the 18th century not infrequently have the appearance of a scene from Watteau transformed into precious marbles and ormolu. They were *pétillantes*, like a goblet of champagne or a *soubrette*; sparkling as nothing we produced could be. While we had a Grinling Gibbons in alliance with a Wren, they had their Clodion and their Gouthière embellishing the work of a Mansard. All the difference lay there; which is not to say that all the gain was on one side. But the difference exists, and is fundamental, accounting for failures following on the pretentious claims of a Kent, or the inanities of a Chippendale's Orientalism. There is always danger in playing the sedulous ape, and the trouble with us, at all events during the 18th century, was that we were obsessed by the tyranny of the "Grand Tour." We no longer absorbed, we submitted.

Abroad there was greater continuity. We can account for the dainty Parisian boudoir of a marquise by studying the painted wood hunting-box of Henry IV. at Alençon. We have examined this latter in the South

Design by Inigo Jones.



Design by Inigo Jones



Kensington galleries. We have only to walk a few paces to find the other. This boudoir has been transported for us in its entirety from the rue vieille du Temple, where Claude Clodion and Gouthière worked under the supervision of Marie Antoinette to make a dainty nest for one of her favourites. It is quite a tiny, square room, very tall, with carved ceiling, and every square inch of it is gay with bright colours, just as it is in that country cottage affair of Henry of Navarre. Only here the design is lighter, the execution infinitely more perfect, and the materials much richer, the cornice, mouldings on panels of walls and ceiling gilded. The chimneypiece, about 3 ft. 6 in. by 3 ft., is placed in the middle of the wall, is of pure white marble with elegantly shaped jambs, lintel and circular ending shelf, the sides adorned with two Persian termini (veritable Orientals in turbans and flowing robes) in grey marble. The scrollwork on bases of these figures, on the lintel and on the fender are of beautifully moulded gilt bronze ; the fire-back and cheeks of well modelled cast iron. It is a fragile piece of work, as exquisite in detail —for the grey marble figures, the gilded

metal scrolls, are perfect in themselves—as it is successful as a whole. But it is only fitted, as a whole, to that frivolous little *bonbonnière*. It is a sort of fireplace to suggest lively chatter, a high degree of selfish culture, and therefore is very far away from the family hearth, the patriarchal huge chimneypieces of the common hall. By over refining ideals—comfort and pretty surroundings—the marquises had arrived at something which was the negation of home.

Of course there was a good deal that lay between the two, as the Louvre, Fontainebleau, and Versailles bear witness. At the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris there is a Louis XIV. carved wood chimneypiece having pilasters adorned with heavy undercut acanthus leaves, which support a decorated frieze, the panels above being filled with foliage and scrollwork. Another of the same type and period has a domed curved breast, with flat top. Le Pautre has described and preserved drawings of some of the wonders in the old Château de Madrid, which stood on the outskirts of the Bois de Boulogne. On each floor there was a large hall with a "Cheminée Royale," behind which was a small staircase leading

to the next floor. In other rooms there were two fireplaces reaching to the ceiling, one on each side of a doorway. Closer to our Clodion and Gouthière specimen is the 1747 red marble chimneypiece at Versailles. It is elegantly shaped, has scrolls of gilt bronze, and at its angles are a male and female termini, leaning forward smiling, in no menial attitude, also in gilt bronze. In another room of that monstrous pile is a white marble chimneypiece of 1775, with gilt bronze ornaments, and also provided with termini, in this case two chubby nude boys in white marble, drawing about their heads and waists grey drapery. Although they are in the position of supports, under the overhanging mantelshelf, with heads slightly bent forward, there is no sign of strain about their dimpled, smiling little persons. Here, with the gilt bronze figures of Caffieri, the white marble babes of an unknown sculptor, and the grey marble Persians of Clodion, we are face to face with works of art, whose perfection is in no way diminished by their subordination to a purely decorative purpose.

If we go to the Rijks Museum at Amsterdam we will find quite as extravagant a

development, though on more homely lines. Thus one specimen bearing the date 1561 has powerful termini, the pilasters ornamented with suns in splendour. Volutes, springing from grotesque masks, support frames with armorial shields. This is painted with tints of flesh-colour, green, red, black, and gold. One, dated 1614, has a carved white stone fireplace with horned atlantes, supporting an overmantel in carved wood. Another from Western Flanders and dated 1617, is in grey stone, with caryatides in contemporary local costumes, resting on pedestals adorned with masks. The overmantel is treated architecturally with columns, frieze and cornice. The oak panels are inlaid with ebonised oak and white beech, surrounded by bands of mahogany, pointed with ivory buttons.

Inigo Jones, whose treatment of the chimneypiece we have already discussed, did much to banish the Gothic and lead the Jacobean to a sober school of classic architecture. But he was succeeded by an even more imposing genius in the person of Christopher Wren. With all his leanings towards Vitruvius and Palladio, his admiration for the remains of Greek and Roman

splendour, and his scientific bent, Wren loved a certain amount of display. The Renaissance masters appealed to him forcibly, and we find him decorating his classic designs with no meagre hand. This applies especially to interiors. His fireplaces, although drawn in harmony with the classic orders he affected, were loaded with ornaments, corresponding to the heavy modelled and moulded plasterwork he loved to see on his ceilings, surrounding his doors and windows. Jones's quiet beadings, fillets, hollows and rounds, small masks and floral garlands, were replaced by strongly carved trophies, big wreaths, swollen bunches of flowers and fruit and figures of children. Grinling Gibbons, that incomparable wood carver, whose technique was far superior to his taste, decorated many a chimneypiece whose pure outline betrays the master hand. With him came a veritable Renaissance of English carving, but like the worthy Italians in the matter of grotesque, though fired by the splendid remnants of a bygone age, he preferred to let his fancy run riot. At the root of this revival in wood carving there was a desire to go back to Nature as the great teacher. Unfortunately Nature was

studied more with the eyes of mechanics than those of artists. Many of the works of Gibbons and his contemporaries are exact reproductions of the objects portrayed ; they show exquisite single bits, but the general result is not natural, and is sometimes so heavy as to suggest grossness. We see something of this in existing chimneypieces. It is not altogether absent from the very interesting collection of sketches, in monochrome and colour, for chimneypieces and mural decorations intended for Hampton Court Palace, now preserved at the Soane Museum. These sketches are bound up in a bulky volume, once in the possession of Dance, and they are attributed to the hand of Grinling Gibbons. It is possible that the architectural features may be actual elaborations of indications by Wren, but the drawings for the decorations betray the touch of a sculptor, one who knew the nature of materials and the difficulties of technique. We reproduce three of these sketches, which demonstrate both the strength and the weakness of the Gibbons school. Take item by item and you are bound to admire the beauty and truthfulness of the representation. The figures of the children are de-

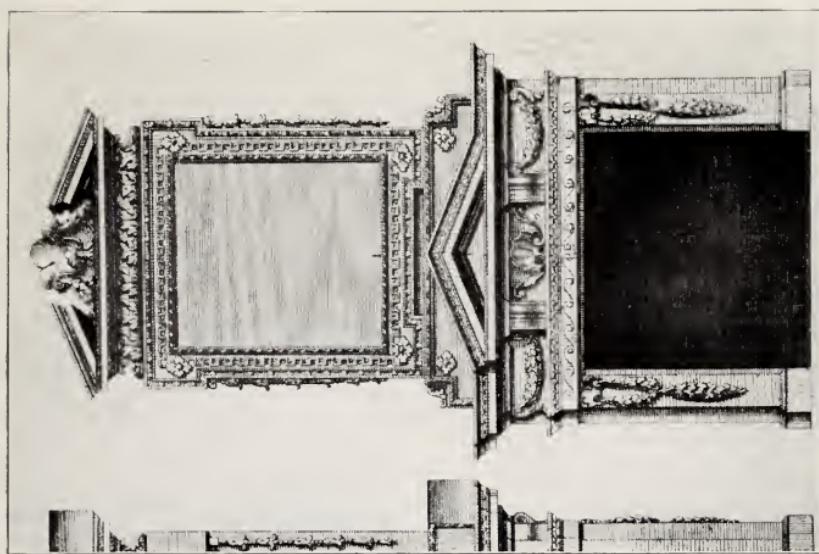
lightful. On the other hand there is too much of detail; we are rather oppressed by the mass, which lacks the lightness and elegance we desire to associate with flowers and fruit. Then again, the grouping is not very happy. The use of the drapery canopy is rather nonsensical in one case, and painfully funereal in the other. We are left to admire details, for instance the quite admirable grouping of the cupids in the unfinished sketch, which breaks the straight lines of the upper portion of the severely simple chimneypiece, and humanises it; and then the very beautiful frieze.

William Kent, a pupil and admirer of Inigo Jones, and one who, as at Holkham, actually carried out work, such as chimneypieces, designed by the master, professed to be a true follower of classical tradition. He was, however, a Renaissance man, as his rather clumsy outline shows. We can contrast his two chimneypieces given in this book with the two by Jones. The coarsening is at once apparent. As a rule he was good as a decorator, but he suffered from the same defects as Gibbons, he massed and enlarged his details too much, and they gave the unfortunate impression of being

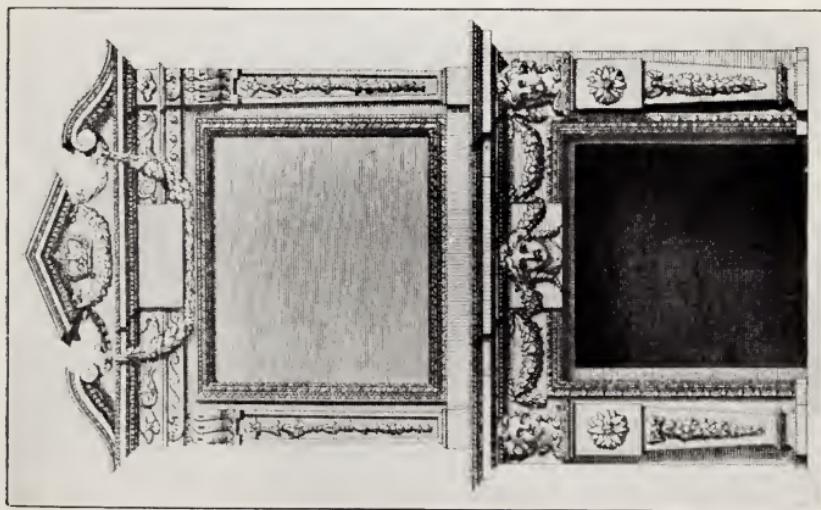
stuck on. They did not combine with the design as did the quite foreign Tudor scroll-work on classic backgrounds, or hang naturally as the garlands of Inigo Jones or the scrolls of Gouthière.

Kent's work may be seen in many London and country houses, among others at Kensington Palace and at Houghton, Norfolk. His propensity for over emphasis and unfortunate choice of detail is only too apparent at the latter place. In the hall there is a specimen well recessed, but also with considerable projection. The jambs have canephori termini, with derisively small baskets of flowers on their heads, and so placed as to appear to be actually sustaining the weight. The jambs are buttressed by side consoles, their thicker voluted ends resting on square bases, and provided with capitals. This idea of side support is again seen in the Salon, where we have a black marble continued type of structure, with gilt embellishments. The base has two pairs of classic columns, one pair placed in front as supports for the lintel and architrave, the others stepped back to buttress the sides. Above these side columns are caryatides. The whole is topped by a broken pediment with cartouche

Design by William Kent.



Design by William Kent.



and trailing ivy. The central panel has a carved frame, and on the lintel is a large Star and Garter. Console buttresses appear again in the drawing-room, where they have cherubs' heads as capitals, the frame on the overmantel is carved by Grinling Gibbons. The side buttressing once more appears in the dining-room.

The architectural books of this period are well worth study in this connection. Colin Campbell, in his "*Vitruvius Britannicus*," gives several examples of his chimneypieces, which have some of the merits and most of the faults of Kent, though those designed for a back parlour in Brook Street, Grosvenor Square, and for Brookbank's mansion at Hackney, are good.

Ware, in his "*Complete Body of Architecture*," has much that deserves attention. Among his suggestions is one that might well be tried in this age of love of novelty and outdoor life. He says that the blank space in the panel of a continued chimney-piece could be filled with a wind-indicating dial. He even gives an illustration of his idea. The dial is surrounded by scrollwork, and four cherubims puffing at the cardinal points. He fails to say how it was to work,

but presumably this could be done by connecting the needle by means of light rods and levers to an outside vane.

George Richardson, in his "New Collection," gives 36 designs of chimneypieces in what he conceives to be the Etruscan, Greek, and Roman styles of architecture. He affects the simple type (without overmantel) and advocates polychromatic schemes obtained by the use of varied materials. Thus in one instance we have white marble relieved with a brownish variety for details. In another he uses white marble and green marble, with yellow pilasters and reddish brown medallions.

Isaac Ware suggested that Anglesea green marble, "with its white asbestos veins," would make a fine background for white marble columns, or alternately that it would look well as columns against a white background. Richardson's caryatic figures are usually good, forming an integral part of the design, without being given apparent heavy work to do.

Both Chippendale and Lock were offenders in the matter of designing chimneypieces. The former was chiefly responsible for the application of the Oriental craze in

this direction. He designed "Chinese" and "Indian" fireplace surrounds, generally of the continued type. These were remarkable for great breadth, lightness of construction and a profusion of weird scrollwork, partly foliated and merging into trees, occasionally into pagodas and little figures of Chinamen or Indians. The scrolls were usually composition or carved wood in high relief on plain painted wood, but sometimes the flat surfaces were filled with mirrors. Very often these chimneypieces were lopsided, purposely out of balance, all the scrollwork running to one side, apparently with the idea of showing the eccentricity of the Chinese mind. Altogether a very poor imitation of their carved jade and wood-work. A mild specimen of the outcome of this school, with marble jambs and lintel, in wood and composition, and a large central mirror, is to be seen at South Kensington.

Perhaps the worst culprit in this connection, however, was Piranesi, who in his sumptuous tome on how to adorn chimneypieces, deliberately sets out to compose monstrosities in the Egyptian, Etruscan, Greek, and Roman styles, with the funniest results imaginable. There is no denying that

Piranesi had a big outlook on the world, delighting to magnify the works of man. His designs are all on a grandiose scale, overloaded with unnecessary members smothered under a mass of detail. It is at least doubtful whether, if the creators of the Sphinx, the builders of the Pyramids or even of Dendera had revisited this earth, they would have constructed fireplaces quite as our Italian enthusiast designed them. He piled pyramids on pillars, used hieroglyphics as surface decorations with lotus blossoms and papyrus, employed colossal Egyptians as Atlantes, or placed them idly by, as quizzical onlookers, not the least disturbed by the fact that they were often *memento mori*, being equipped in mummified form. Sometimes these figures sat on benches, their backs buttressing the jambs. In one case he actually has two pairs of almost nude Egyptians placed upside down, supporting themselves on their hands, back to back, their heads reversed, so that they almost rub noses, while on the side of these are two colossi, rigid, with the far away look of the impassive deified. His treatment of the Etruscan and classic is just as extravagant. We have reason to

thank our stars that much of this remained on paper.

But we must hark back to some typical examples of this period as actually existing *in situ* or in collections.

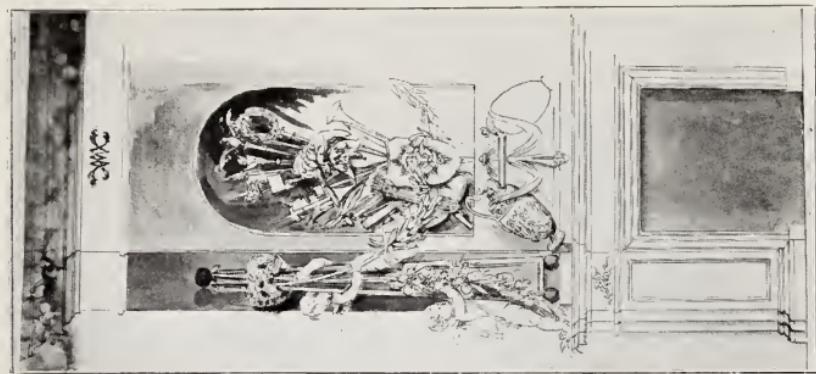
Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire, presented many interesting examples. It was rebuilt by Huntingdon Smithson for Sir Charles Cavendish early in the 17th century. The idea seems to have been to preserve, as far as compatible with the then prevailing ideas of comfort, the baronial castle style. The chimneypieces consequently were large, with strong members, built-up pyramidal hoods, but fairly simple as to details. Many of these are placed in the angles of rooms, and have semi-circular projecting outline. A curious feature is that these fireplaces are usually surrounded by a wall of plain large stone masonry, with outer moulding, against which the wood panelling is brought. It is a somewhat affected, but not ineffective, imitation of the precautions taken when wood panelling was first introduced into castles, or when wood entered largely into construction. This type of angle chimneypiece we find reproduced at Hampton Court with happy results. We see one with a wide

opening, a decorated iron fire-plate cutting off the back triangle, a semi-circular upright breast with fine mouldings, surmounted by a shelf, and a small receding pyramidal hood, with flat top, and fine carved bunches of flowers and fruit, apparently by Gibbons, pendant from the top.

At Charlton House we find a handsome combination in the Saloon of white alabaster and black marble, with fine figures of Vulcan and Venus, the decoration being of Greek line and scrollwork. One of marble in the drawing-room, with good plain spaces, was so highly polished that Dr. Plot tells us "the Lord of Downe did see in it a robbery committed on Shooter's Hill," that is, he saw a reflection of what was occurring a mile or more away, "whereupon, sending out his servants, the thieves were taken." Certainly a novel use for such a feature of architecture.

Rowland Bucket provided a finely designed, lavishly decorated chimneypiece for the old Governor's Room at the Charterhouse, City, for which he received £50 from the then Governor (temp. Charles I.). The lower part has panels of white marble, with arched mouldings, enclosing figure

Designs by Grinling Gibbons for Hampton Court Palace.



medallions, with foliated scrolls. These are placed between pairs of black marble columns with gilt bases and capitals, the whole resting on blood-red pedestals decorated with fancy mouldings. The lintel is of red marble framed in white, and having three long black panels adorned with figure groups in gold outline. Above this is a black and gold frieze, then a projecting shelf with mouldings, supporting the overmantel, which is a mass of fine arabesques. In the centre are the arms of Charles I., with supporters and lambrequin, neatly framed in an oval. The corner spaces of this panel are filled with four circular medallions, with the Evangelists done in gold outline on a black background. The four ornamental columns have the heads of the twelve Apostles placed in small circles amidst floral arabesques. These columns, and two narrow panels, rest on decorated pedestals, having ovals containing delicate pictures in gold of the Salutation and the Last Supper. Between these, on a narrow panel, are the arms of Thomas Sutton, founder of the Hospital, supported by two angels, and the initials "T. S.," the whole surrounded by arabesques. Our plate, although lacking the charm

associated with glow of colour, gives a fair idea of the delicacy and beauty of this exceptional piece, which has all the love of display, the fancy, and the patience in crowding in detail of the later Renaissance, without any suggestion of its tawdriness and vulgarity. Here again the introduction and blending of the heraldic motifs is well done.

An equally commendable example of late Renaissance, 1686, is now preserved at South Kensington. It is the oak and cedar panelling, ceiling, and other fittings, from a room in Clifford's Inn. The chimney surround is of black marble with white veining, daintily shaped, and with sober carving. The outer casing is of carved oak, rich in floral scrollwork. There is a projecting shelf, and above this a panel with a handsome beaded frame, surrounded by flowers and foliage carved in high relief in the Grinling Gibbons style. Above this, scroll-work supports a quartered shield, in heraldic colours. This lawyer's sober, refined den should be compared with the two French rooms in the same gallery, already referred to in these pages.

Several less imposing but instructive ex-

amples of English work are to be seen in this Museum. The preference for termini over full figures is noticeable, and also the sadly disproportionate effect of small baskets crowning canephori. The broken pediment is a favourite device. Mostly these have stone or marble linings with wood surroundings. In some of these we see a tendency to return for decorative details direct to the ancients. While the outlines are somewhat incongruous, still being reminiscent of the Jacobean period, the ornaments of the wave, Greek key, and similar patterns, are frequently adopted. One specimen has a broad frieze with a very characteristic type of decoration —delicately carved sprays of flowers and leaves, with flowing ribbons, quite small, and of medium relief, and stuck on to the panelling. This was carried out either in wood or composition. The naturalistic feeling, but based on sound principles of design, takes us away from the Renaissance and Grinling Gibbons schools back to Gothic carvers of the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries. For the decoration of upper panels this method possessed considerable merits. It is purely surface decoration.

CHAPTER IX.

NEO-CLASSIC.

ALL Renaissance work, no doubt, was ostensibly based on a study of the antique; but, so far as decoration is concerned, attention was chiefly directed to an adaptation and development of the grotesques, or "arabesques," of the decadent period of classic art, with the introduction of extraordinary figures and a few other motifs. When this degenerated into licence, there were men who wished to return direct to the antique, guided by Vitruvius and Palladio, for decoration as well as general design. Among these were Inigo Jones and, to a lesser extent, Christopher Wren, William Kent, Isaac Ware. As we have seen, with the exception of the first-named, their intentions were better than their

performance in the matter of simplification.

In Robert Dance we have, if a rather uninspired, yet a sincere student of the classic. We may be more appalled than impressed by the exterior of the official residence of the Lord Mayor of London, but the interior treatment is not lacking in dignity, well becoming a building of this class. In the designing of chimney-pieces he showed a restraint that was often pleasing. He was strong enough to take some liberties as regards hard and fast lines of proportion. He gave greater breadth than either Jones or Kent, which was an improvement, especially as applied to the "continued type." There was, however, a frequent absence of continuity in design. His entablatures too often have the appearance of reduced scale models placed on a substantial base, as we see in his Mansion House work. This was not always an improvement on the top-heavy designs of certain of the earlier architects. With him the broken pediment also proved a pitfall. He was fond, in his monumental structures, of cutting through the ceiling cornice with

his pediments, which was well enough if he kept them closed, but when broken, the unity of the whole design was destroyed.

With Sir William Chambers the classic influence was predominant. He laid down that the opening of a fireplace of moderate size should be near the square, in small ones a trifle higher, and in large ones lower. Happily he inclined to the "moderate" and "large," with pleasing effect, as will be gathered from our two examples taken from original sketches at the Soane Museum. These also show the charm of his restrained decoration. In theory and practice he admitted the use of architraves, friezes, cornices, columns, pilasters, termini, caryatides, consoles and all kinds of ornament, though he kept these within bounds.

In connection with Chambers's theory of proportions, it may be pointed out that the usual rule banishing horizontal lines from a low room to prevent its being further dwarfed as the result of optical illusion, can often be abandoned with advantage in designing chimneypieces. A broad, low fireplace in a long, low room, gives

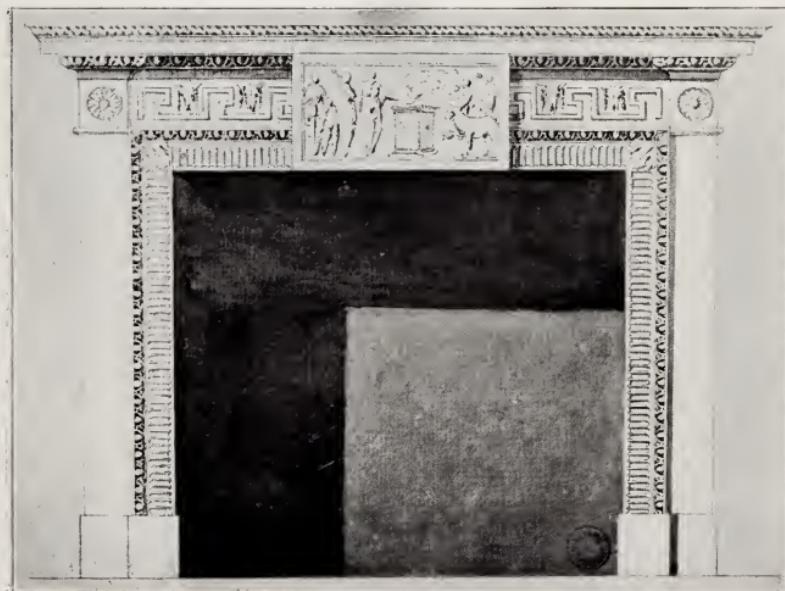
it a comfortable appearance that more than counterbalances any advantage to be attained by employing a narrow "continued" chimneypiece in order to increase apparent height. This certainly holds good as regards country cottages, and middle class houses, though it may not apply so forcibly in more pretentious dwellings, where richer and statelier decorations prevail.

After Chambers came Robert Adam, who professed himself dissatisfied with the heaviness of the Kent school, and the mechanical process in decoration introduced by Wren and many of Gibbon's followers. For decoration Adams went back direct to the ancients, and from them he adopted the sound doctrine that every part should be consistent with the whole. Consequently his chimneypieces, although built up of classic members and ornamented with classic designs, always fit in with his rooms and harmonise with all else there. He was rather apt to subordinate this feature, for his doorways and window openings often seem of greater importance than the chimneypieces. As a rule they were of moderate size, of the "simple" class (without

overmantel), of slight projection, and there was, as a rule, very little carving other than purely surface ornamentation. It must be remembered to his credit that he successfully overcame the difficult task of designing really good fire-grates, thoroughly in keeping with the rest of the composition, a problem that did not obtrude itself on most of the Renaissance men, who were building for wood, and not a coal-burning generation. Certain faults were inherent in Adam's ideals. If he did not oppress with the robustiousness of contour and colour of Kent, his designing on a smaller scale in low relief did not always save him from overcrowding, and his subdued tints are sometimes depressing, whilst alas, his methods of production became quite as mechanical as anything Wren ever attempted. The elegant little wreaths, stiff palmated fans, and repeated looped garlands degenerated into lifeless mannerisms. There is an absence of breadth of treatment in his fireplaces which places them lower in the scale of beauty than those of Chambers and even of Dance. Plenty of opportunities exist for studying his chimney-pieces amidst their proper surroundings in



Design by Robert Adam.



Design by Robert Adam.

town houses, chiefly in London and Edinburgh, and in country mansions, such as Kedleston and Shelbourne Houses. The examples chosen for illustration show Adam's work at its best, characteristic in outline, with simplified decoration, and, on the whole, carefully balanced.

Removed from Adam by about half a century, Sir John Soane carried simplicity even further than Dance or Chambers. He preferred white marble, which he used in narrow slabs for jambs and lintel and very narrow shelf. The mouldings were plain and sunk, the fluting rounded, as were all edges, including the ends of the chimney shelf, while the projection was reduced to a minimum. The effect is undoubtedly very chaste, and certainly this treatment in no way hampers the book and picture collector. But it means the attenuation of the chimneypiece to its more elementary form. In outline and principle, Soane's chimneypieces remind us of the simple kind that came in with the elaborate Tudor panelling, and were specially affected by the tapestry and picture loving Henry VIII. For picture and sculpture galleries and working libraries,

the flat Tudor, the unobtrusive Soane types are perfection, but they are deficient in any suggestion of homely sociability. There are three or four variations of this type at No. 13, Lincoln's Inn Fields, which may be commended to judicious study, as the nearest approach to the Greek spirit in architecture, as applied to a modern development.

CHAPTER X.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

IF we take a general survey of the work done during the first three quarters of the century, or even up to within its last decade, the result is eminently unsatisfactory. Architects had lost interest in the design of fireplaces, and these rapidly became purely a matter of mechanical reproduction on "a commercial scale." Birmingham and Sheffield turned out iron and steel grates, and entire fireplaces, by the gross, and even if, as occasionally happened, they worked from good designs, the products were mostly of a hard, lifeless description. On the other hand marble, once expensive and somewhat scarce, became cheap and plentiful, the mason turned out marble chimneypieces by the score, or, what was worse, manufactured the separate members wholesale, to be fitted

and adopted by builders as their sense of taste or regard to economy dictated. For the majority it was a case of submitting to the tyranny of the grate manufacturers and the marble merchants. This is true even as regards quite expensively built houses, where the boxed marble chimneypiece became *de rigueur*, to use a mid-Victorian phrase.

That some architects were not content with this state of affairs and rendered willing help to manufacturers anxious to improve their products, many existing specimens demonstrate. At the International Exhibition of 1862 several artists and manufacturers joined forces. For instance, Maws of Birmingham showed an improved fireplace designed by Digby Wyatt. It was at a time when the marvels of the Spanish Mauresque style had caught popular fancy and was inducing a call for beauty of outline and colour. Wyatt's chimneypiece was designed in "the Alhambra style." The framework was of Masefield stone, was rectangular, the mantelshelf, plinth and bands serving as a setting to richly coloured enamelled tiles, which filled most of the space. These tiles were made in imitation of the Spanish Mauresque *azulejos*. They were of blue

with designs on them in brown, red, orange yellow and white, with small spots of green. The large panel tiles forming a surround for the fire-grate, which was recessed between the jambs under the lintel, had orange backgrounds with blue cable circles with yellow rosette centres and conventional foliage in green. A few had a touch of violet introduced. Apart from the stress and scolloped edge brackets supporting the shelf and the moulded cornice running round the fireplace opening, the design was flat. Both in this and the rectangular shape Wyatt departed from the methods adopted by the builders of the Alhambra, as well as by Turkish designers of fireplaces. A thoroughly typical example of Turkish glazed tile work is now at South Kensington, having been brought to the Museum from Fujad Pasha's Palace at Constantinople. It is dated 1731, stands about 12 feet high, and is about 4 feet wide. The hearth is of stone, carved with lotus flowers, the lining and slightly oval back of burnt clay or hardened plaster. The surround and the tall pointed hood with characteristic opening are lined with glazed tiles about six inches square, having conventionalised floral designs in blue, green and red carried

out on a greeny-white background. There is no involved tracery, and only one band of script round the arch. Thus there is a narrow funnel from hearth to chimney throat. In Turkey and many other countries where small wood is burnt, as indeed was the case with us in old days, the fire was built up in pyramidal form, as this induced quick lighting. For this reason, and the harmony of the outline with Mauresque architecture, it is probable that the form here seen is of native origin, and not a mere copy of the Gothic hood. Pierre Chabat, in his dictionary of architectural terms, gives a picture of a very similar chimneypiece belonging to the 17th century in the Palace of the Governor of Keresoun on the Black Sea, only in that instance the materials used were carved stone and a hood screen of moulded plaster. The term "Alhambra style" as applied to Wyatt's design is characteristic of the names given to fireplaces generally. The geographical and even the chronological names refer only to the surface ornamentation, and not always to that. This was unfortunate for it led to the perpetration and multiplication of anomalous monstrosities by manufacturers.

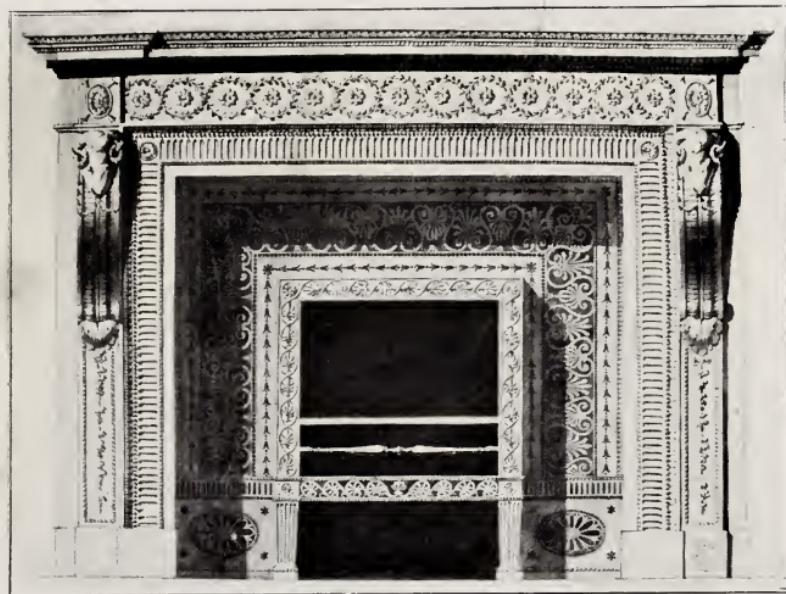
Reverting to the 1862 Exhibition, we find that John Thomas, who had a considerable reputation in his day as a sculptor and decorator, sent a carved marble fireplace. It was flat, with carved pillar and bases, bearing busts of children, had no shelf, but a heavy cornice swelling into a semi-circular form in the centre, two low relief female figures with butterfly wings and two cupids hovering above the gorgeous colour-enamelled semi-circular steel grate, to which the marble work was a mere frame. Neither design nor colour scheme was worth the trouble. The curved breast screen was decorated with black enamelled radiating lines, while the arch, springing from two short pedestals, had gold bands enclosing a series of blue circles with gold star centres and red borders.

As we have said, it was the age of the grate maker and of the boxed marble mantelpiece. It would be erroneous, however, to give the impression that the grate manufacturer's work was altogether futile. As we shall endeavour to shew in a subsequent chapter, the practically universal substitution of coal for wood as fuel made his intervention necessary, but for the time it

appeared to almost paralyse all initiative on the architect's part when the everyday order of work had to be undertaken. Pugin's work in the reintroduction of the Gothic had some temporary influence, but only for a brief period so far as interior domestic decoration was concerned. Though even in this instance the gratemakers and even the stonemasons seized hold of the idea, and reduced it to the mechanical level that Pugin specially abhorred, though he could not himself escape the tendency of the age.

On the Continent the boxed marble chimneypiece never reached the same strong position as it did with us, and the grate trouble was unknown. On the other hand, towards the middle of the century the enamelled metal or stoneware stove had an enormous vogue. But, on the whole, the sculptor succeeded in maintaining his own, while even the use of *ormolu* was not discarded.

Some of the Continental sculptors came over to our shores and did much work. One of these, belonging largely to the previous century, but whose later influence was considerable, and so should be mentioned here, was Canova. He was an industrious



Chimneypiece and Grate, by Robert Adam.



Design by Sir William Chambers

sculptor of unquestionable merit, though too much of his work was of the "pot-boiler" order. He, however, did useful service in familiarising us with the idea that sculpture need not be divorced from everyday matters. For instance, he carved chimneypieces, two of these being at Ickworth, Bury St Edmunds. Both are classic in style. One is an imposing affair with Ionic fluted columns, groups of statuary, and a very beautiful frieze with sculptured figures. In the other case the white marble is ornamented with a beautiful inlay of coloured stones, the designs including Vitruvian scrolls, open floral scrolls, and medallions with a duck, a hare, and a hound.

This inlay of fine coloured designs on chimneypieces was an Italian notion, suggested by mosaic work. Horace Walpole had a handsome example in the circular boudoir at Strawberry Hill. It is of white marble, with alabaster panels decorated with floral and conventional patterns in coloured mosaics. The columns are spirally grooved, the depressions having a dainty pattern of myrtle leaves carried out in mosaics, which puts us in mind of the beautiful spiral mosaic decorated columns at St. John

Lateran at Rome. These have, indeed, been copied, and are to be found forming part of the magnificent chimneypiece at Eaton Hall, Cheshire. This is of Carrara marble, and was made at Rome. It has coupled columns on both lower and upper part, these being dwarf copies from St. John, and, like them, are grooved, some spirally, and decorated with glass mosaic and agates. A charming effect is achieved by the treatment of the frieze or lintel. It has a wavy line, the lower part being cut away. In the depression of the wave forms are circular plaques filled with rich mosaics. This was put up in 1869.

In Italy, as we have said, this form of decoration, though costly, was a recognised method of embellishing fireplaces. It is curious that when in 1803 the Pope wished to make friends with Napoleon, he sent to him at Paris a huge white marble chimneypiece. It incorporated antique Roman sculptures, and was encrusted with mosaics, carried out by Raffaelli, one of the most celebrated workers in this kind of that period. This costly and unique gift arrived safely in Paris, together with a clock designed in the same style. There it seems

to have disappeared, for though the clock is to be seen at Fontainebleau, no trace of the chimneypiece has been found. Yet it is hardly possible for so bulky a thing to be mislaid, even in a National Garde Meuble, and it must have been too remarkable to have been broken up. Is it possible that owing to its beauty and derivation it has been transformed into some ecclesiastical monument? The theory is not so far fetched as many may suppose. When Richard Cosway took up his residence at No. 20 Stratford Place, he had the house lavishly furnished and decorated. Among his most treasured possessions were certain fine chimneypieces designed by his friend, Thomas Banks, R.A., the architect. Cosway had to leave these behind when a lampoon drove him away from his home, and there they remained until one day, early in this century, although the lease of the premises had passed into other hands, the ground landlord, without asking permission, had one of the finest specimens removed, and, after slight alterations, set it up in a church as a monument, clearly evidencing a strange lack of imagination and sense of humour, which was further shown by the fact that a lawsuit

was necessary to secure the restoration of that fireplace to its original position.

We may be pardoned if we now pass on to a consideration of Alfred Stevens' fireplace in the Saloon at Dorchester House. Fine as this undoubtedly is both in general design and in finish of detail, it would, with but slight alteration, be quite suitable for some Campo Santo. As our illustration of Stevens' original model, now at South Kensington, shows, it is a monumental structure, admirably proportioned for a large hall, as beautiful in its purely architectural features as it is in regard to its figure sculptures. The two caryatic figures are in very unusual attitudes. They are nude, but without offence even in such a position, full of strength, yet suggesting no strain, as the weight is on the shoulders and hands, not on the head. The carved frieze is also very fine work. Perhaps the weak spot is the armorial shield and its supporter. Both appear to be out of place, and scarcely add to the dignity of the composition. It would have been better to have left out the armorial bearings altogether, rather than to resort to an obvious makeshift of this kind.

In the main the work of the 19th century

was poor, and such exceptional examples of chimneypieces as we do possess in England were, until the last few decades, really imitative.

From 1880 to 1900 may be termed a period of revivals. Chimneypieces in the Renaissance, the Louis Quatorze, Quinze and Seize, the Jacobean, Georgian and Adam styles were designed for public, semi-public, and private buildings. This showed a stirring which was to bring change, and change could only be for the better.

CHAPTER XI.

CURRENT PRACTICE.

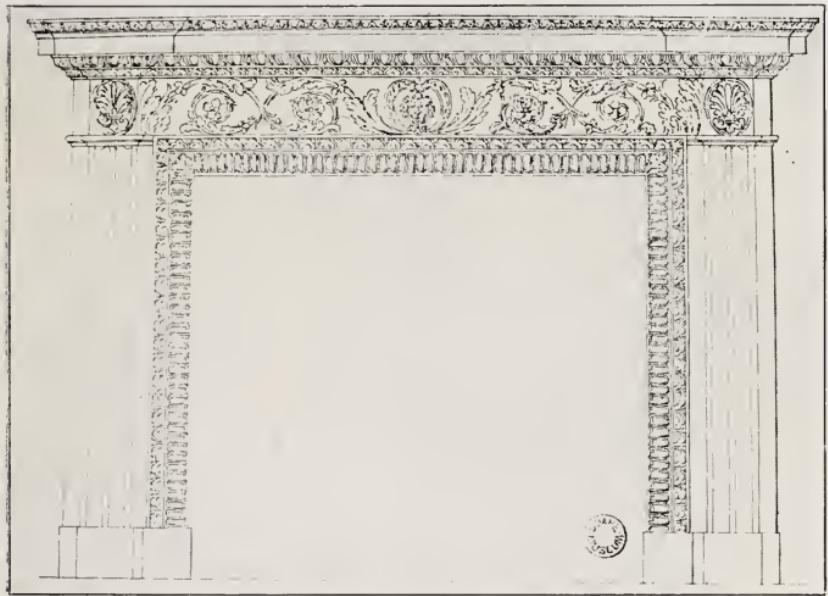
FIREPLACES, as a result of that unrest begotten in recent years by the endeavour to find new expressions for the artistic ideals in architecture, have come by their own again. For it has been recognised that they possess immense possibilities whereby the keynote to the expression aimed at may be given. This, of course, entails the acceptance of that other important fact—the chimneypiece must truly form part of the picture regarded as a deliberate and vital composition. Rebels there have been, however, who have asserted, and made good their assertion, that this does not compel to a dead level of uniformity in the design of prominent decorative features or in detail. They insist that harmony may be reached by daring to be original, and they regard the fireplace as

a fitting opportunity for the display of individuality. Certainly some of the current doings in this direction are calculated to horrify the methodist, be he a lover of the past or one athirst for some satisfying novelty. So much the worse for the man of hard and fast rules, say the successful innovators. And, looking at work achieved, we can but admit the justice of the retort.

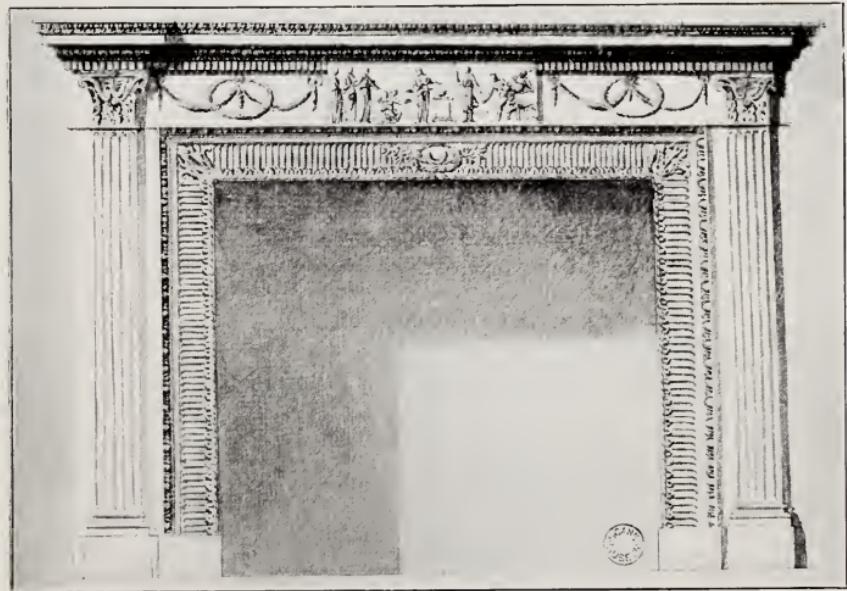
There has, of course, been no complete breaking away from the past, unless it be from the tyranny of the Victorian heavy boxed marble surrounds, with their ugly stereotyped iron grates, and the richness of decoration associated with both the Gothic and Renaissance styles. Indeed, the influence of pre-Victorian work has been successfully brought to bear on present day needs.

At Balcombe Place, Sussex, Mr Gerald C. Horsley has produced two monumental chimneypieces quite original in conception, yet modelled on Tudor lines. In the Hall it is a white stone construction, with raised hearth advancing well into the room. The jambs are boldly formed plain columns. Above this is a projecting frieze, supporting a square chimney breast, provided in front

with three arched recesses, containing sculptured figures, with richly carved frieze slanting outwards. This harmonises well with the panelled walls, deep painted frieze and enriched plaster ceiling, with its great crossing beams, also decorated on their side soffits. In the Music Room there is a small recessed fireplace with red brick back, and wings placed at a slant. Above this is a carved wood shelf. Some two feet over this is a projecting mock chimney breast in wood, rising square to the ceiling. It is divided into panels, and richly carved with conventional scrolled foliage. Against the wall are two slender square pillars, with carved brackets, to the eye apparently supporting the heavy superstructure. In this room there are a large organ and a music gallery, with arched screen, the pendentives filled with pierced carving. Something of the same spirit is to be seen in Mr W. A. S. Benson's chimneypiece in a London block of high rented flats. Economy of space being a consideration, this example is given only a slight projection, but in breadth it occupies about a third of one side of the room, and is carried nearly to the ceiling cornice. The fire opening is tall. The side pilasters have



Design by Sir William Chambers.



Design by Robert Adam,

deep panels, with a conventionalised tree inlay. Above the shelf is a semi-circular alcove, with dentated arch, and a recessed panel on each side. Above this are two tall alcoves with dentated arches, and three shallow niches with sculptured figures about 18 inches high. A slightly projecting carved cornice provides a shelf for the display of plaques.

In a sketch for a large hall, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1910 by Mr J. A. Jones, the monumental fireplace is placed next to the grand staircase, the upper part being between the depressed arch opening to the landing and a similar opening on the passage gallery, the balustrade being replaced by carved pierced panels. The fire opening is broad but low, on a slightly raised hearth, and is surmounted by a straight hood in three panels, the side ones slanting back at an angle. This is enclosed by two tall, slender columns with capitals, supporting a projecting carved frieze with an armorial shield in the centre. Above this the plain square hood, with pointed panels, is carried up to the beamed ceiling. This is almost mediæval in feeling.

Somewhat more companionable is Mr Louis

Ambler's short hooded fireplace in the hall at Longwith Lodge, Notts. The fireplace is recessed, has a hearth of glazed tiles, a small, almost square opening, with surround of dull red brick; this is placed under a depressed brick arch resting on short uprights. The carved wood mantel is composed of two fluted Ionic columns supporting an entablature, consisting of frieze with heavy mouldings, projecting cornice, and a receding, truncated conical hood, carried to the ceiling cornice, with three panels indicated by raised mouldings. Inside the columns and under the architrave are thin moulded wood jambs, the lintel forming a shelf with recessed panels. A still more modest rendering of the same type is the chimneypiece put up in the hall of a house at Bushey by Mr H. Kennard, which is designed in half timbered Elizabethan style. It is of stone, with raised hearth, has solid wing walls, undercut in front, supporting a broad upright breast, with neat mouldings at base, projecting cornice, and a plain truncated conical hood. The inside of the hearth is lined with red brick and has a handsome metal fire grate.

This leads us naturally to modern Renaissance work, which is marked by restraint

and quite sensible modifications. A good example is to be seen in Glasgow flats, designed for persons of moderate means, by Mr T. L. Watson. The hearth, of glazed tiles, is surrounded by a marble kerb. The chimneypiece itself has very little projection. It is composed of two Doric columns, the plain shafts resting on decorated bases, supporting a low frieze and projecting cornice with flat top. This is carried up about 6 ft. 6 in., within about 3 ft. of the ceiling cornice. The fire opening is filled with glazed tiles, and a modern hooded metal grate with fire brick lining, framed by strong mouldings forming the jambs and lintel. Above this is a narrow breast and a projecting shaped shelf, there being projecting ledges with rounded consoles for the clock and two vases. Behind this are two panels filled with mirrors, divided by small pilasters with decorated capitals.

A carved oak early Renaissance chimneypiece which we have seen in an oak panelled dining-room showed the danger of designing in a style without realising exactly what it means. The specimen was beautiful in its simple dignity of outline and excellent finish. The fireplace, with rather tall rect-

angular opening, was framed with a band of enriched steel, the jambs decorated with flat panels. A heavy moulded projecting cornice, with flat shelf top, was supported by two pairs of plain shafted Ionic detached columns, each pair standing on a massive joint base. Above the panel the flat breast was panelled, and over this was a truncated conical hood, supported by two pairs of voluted consoles, the panel of the hood being decorated with plain raised moulding. The absurdity was, of course, that this well proportioned, tastefully ornamented hood was over a heavy projecting shelf and flat breast, and had no connection with the fireplace. It therefore not only served no purpose, but was an obvious anachronism.

At Huntercombe Place, Oxfordshire, Mr O. P. Milne has designed a number of quite excellent chimneypieces. In the dining-room, which is lined with dark mahogany panelling, we see a white marble fireplace projecting slightly in front of the carved mahogany surround, the breast being decorated with two wreaths and a basket of flowers. Above this is a projecting cornice, and then a long narrow mirror, divided into three sections; this is topped by a simple

cornice, with an elaborate enriched frieze above. In another room, not panelled, of the same house the fire opening has jambs of glazed bricks, supporting a broad lintel of pictorial glazed tiles. The carved wood surround is carried nearly up to the cornice, has pilasters, rounded sides, and three tall arched niches. At the Eastgate Hotel, Oxford, by Mr E. P. Warren, we have an even plainer, but quite effective, use of tall pillars and panels, enclosing a strongly moulded opening, with an independent projecting shelf above.

At Urban House, York, Mr W. H. Brierley has a delightful rendering of a continued early Renaissance chimneypiece. It has a raised hearth, very wide, somewhat low opening, lined with bricks, laid in chevron courses, white stone plain octagon columns, without capitals or bases, supporting a broad, straight breast, ornamented at its lower edge by a chequered inlay in white and dark stone, a projecting cornice forming a narrow shelf, and above this a panel with raised mouldings, corresponding to the panelling of the room, and a modest cornice, with plain plaster above to the enriched ceiling cornice.

At Tuesley Court, near Godalming, Mr E. Guy Dawber has placed in a rather low pitched room, with large beam ceiling, boarded between, a fireplace having a raised, slightly projecting hearth. The jambs and lintel are of stone, with slight mouldings. The fireplace is lined with bricks, the lower half partly filled with brickwork, to form a well fire, provided with metal bars and ash tray. The wood surround has raised and sunken panels with plain mouldings, and a projecting cornice provides a narrow shelf.

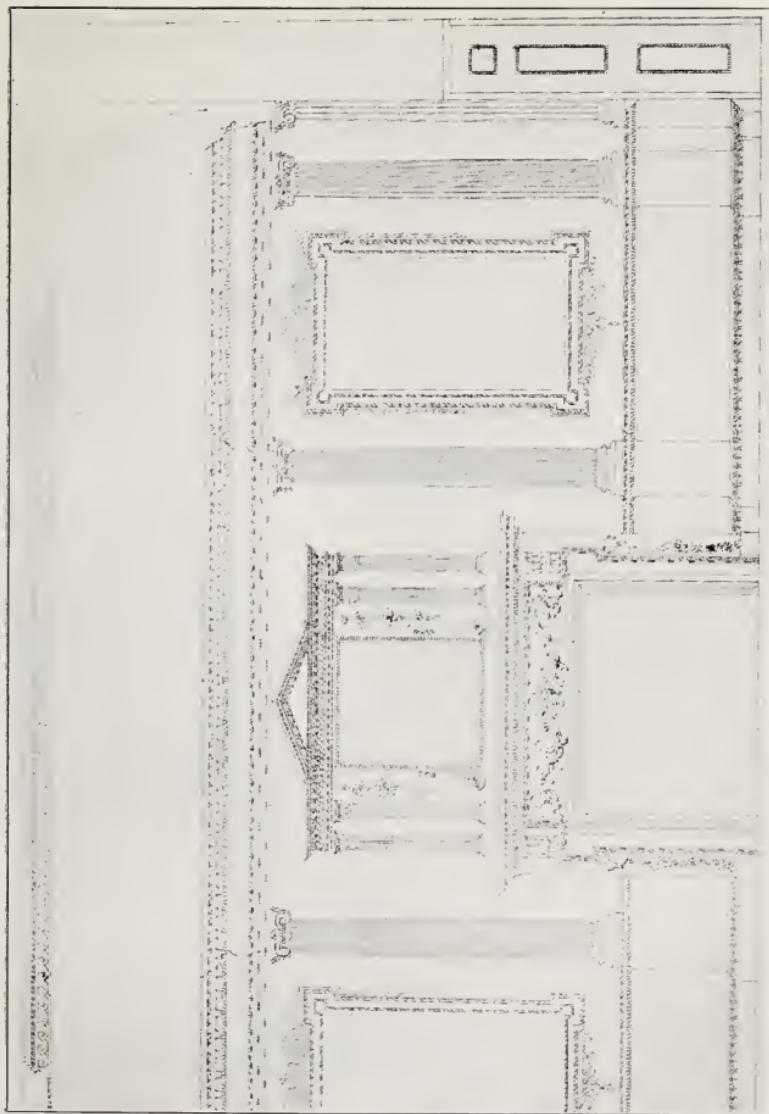
A quaint, though useful and effective novelty introduced by Mr John Murray in the new building for H.M. Office of Works, Forests and Land Revenues, is a projecting shelf, placed midway between the fire opening and 5 foot high flat topped cornice. It is apparently supported by three billet consoles. Another version of this independent shelf is to be seen at Framewood, Stoke Poges, by Mr Gerald Horsley. It is in the green stained deal panelled dining-room, where the fireplace consists of a heavy surround and kerb of Verona marble. The shelf is some inches above this, is narrow, has an under cornice with mouldings, and small fillets in a sunk moulding, and is

supported by two massive consoles, with panelled frames and foliated bases.

A richer treatment of the late Renaissance style is to be seen in the wood panelled Board Room of the North Eastern Railway Company, Westminster, by Mr Horace Field and Mr E. Simmonds. Here, too, we have the fireplace opening framed with mottled marble jambs and lintel, slightly shaped, and kerb. Framing this, but not touching it, is a raised wood moulding, foliated on the outside, with well carved flat topped cornice, the under part consisting of acanthus leaves. Above this, again as an independent decoration, is a heavily framed oblong panel, decorated with a leaf border and a central wreath in coloured wood inlay. Over the frame, and falling on either side, are garlands and sprays of leaves and flowers, heavily carved, after Grinling Gibbons.

Coming to work in a more frankly modern spirit, we find that two tendencies, the coming of the exiguous flat and a revived interest in panelling, have induced great attention to be paid to the flattening of the chimneypiece and the contrivance of the fireplace within the thicknesses of the wall. This latter device has sometimes led to

peculiar results. The former notion that a fireplace should be placed in the middle of any wall has been abandoned, because it has been found convenient to place fireplaces in adjoining rooms, not back to back as was possible when the hearth projected into the room, but side by side, the two being divided by a curtain wall and having openings in the respective rooms. It is only by very clever designing that such lopsidedness can be made tolerable, and only under very rare conditions that it appears to possess inevitable fitness. As a rule, however, thanks to the modern grate, flatness can be obtained without such daring expedients. Sometimes the fire opening is merely framed with slender jambs and lintels of stone or wood, with a slightly projecting shelf, or more elaborate "continued" panelling, with or without niches. At other times we find a broad expanse of glazed tiles or bricks, or marble, framed with wood or marble, either decorated with plain mouldings or more or less heavily carved. The raising of the hearth in such cases is quite common. Sometimes this treatment of the fireplace is formed in conjunction with the rather artificially contrived cosy corner or ingle-nook. In the



Withdrawing Room, Mansion House, London, by Dance.

designing of the interior decoration of flats space saving can be very effectively gained by lining the room with cupboards, glazed or otherwise. This is decidedly appropriate for study or library. Or again for drawing-rooms, when pictures, nick-nacks, and collections of various kinds can be placed behind the glazing, which may be carried down to the floor or not. In such cases the fireplace is simply recessed within the cupboard panelling, and may be provided with recessed shelving in a variety of forms.

Perhaps one of the most striking features of the rebellious spirit is the unexpected obtrusiveness of plain red or buff bricks. This is partly due to the desire for colour, but far more to the resentment against the inordinate use of stucco, and the determination that materials used shall justify themselves. Opportunities for this manifestation of independence in connection with fireplace building are innumerable, and have certainly not been missed.

That a highly decorative and finished effect may be produced by the juxtaposition of brick and wood is shown by the work of Mr Cecil Burns at the Tunbridge Wells and Counties Club. We illustrate one of his

chimneypieces in that building, which strikes a delightfully fresh note, yet one full of dignity. The handsome arched opening is in rubbed bricks, the variations in surface level being excellent, giving such picturesque relief, yet quite in keeping with the material; while the mantel, in Austrian oak, provides a quiet framing, harmonising the brick with the dainty surroundings. Other notes of artistic finish and sober luxury are afforded by the highly ornamental iron fire-grate and back (in true Sussex style), and the red Staffordshire tiled hearth. The style of this building is Georgian Renaissance, and we find in another room an equally successful fireplace in pure neo-classic, the combination being coloured and white marble, oak, and iron. The decoration is quite sober, chiefly bold mouldings on the broad cornices, and two small swags with drops on the narrow chimney breast.

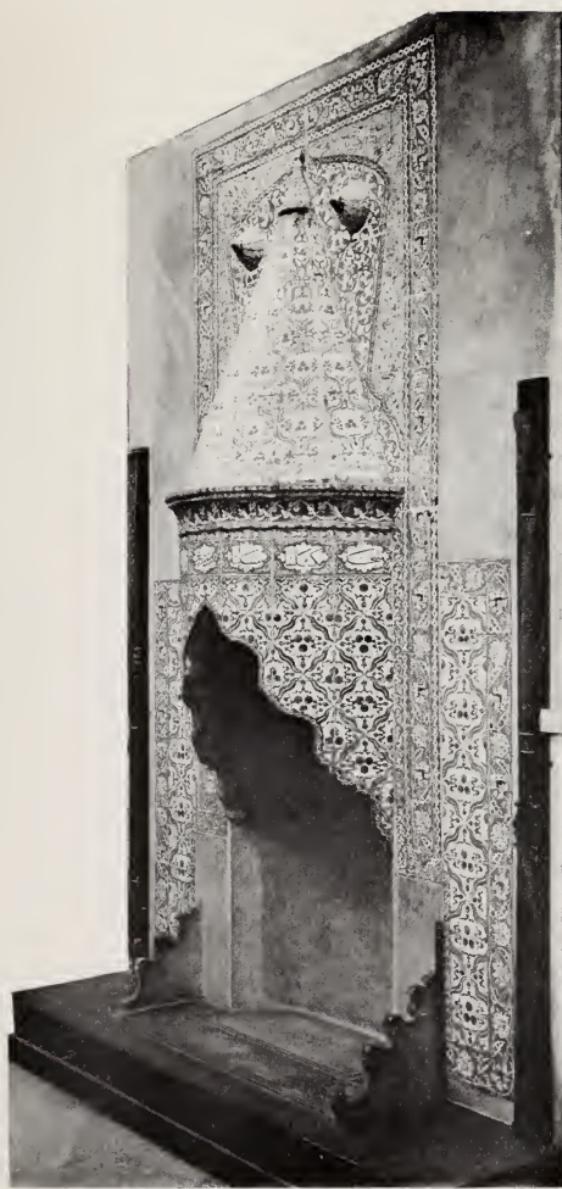
The contrast between red glazed bricks and carved stone is strikingly illustrated in a chimneypiece on Jacobean lines which Messrs Perkins & Bulmer put up in the hall at Shipton Court, Oxfordshire, when that old mansion was remodelled. We have a stone chimneypiece about 5 ft. high, with Doric

columns in the angles, a projecting cornice and a flat hood, with cornice carried up to the ceiling. The fireplace opening is a wide depressed arch, springing from uprights, with plain mouldings. This opening is partly filled up with glazed bricks, surrounding a modern tiled grate with beaten metal hood.

At Shrewsbury Court, Chelsea, Mr C. R. Ashbee has provided one of the flats with a plain stone surround, consisting of jambs, narrow breast, with cornice and narrow shelf. The opening is square, with a round moulding, and is provided with an arched stone screen. The interior, back and sides, is in red stock bricks, carried straight up to the concealed throat. The hearth, surrounded by a square stone kerb, is paved with greyish-blue tiles. A square wrought iron fire-basket stands on fairly high feet.

At Shovelstrode Manor, East Grinstead, Mr E. Turner Powell has a remarkable set of semi-rustic fireplaces, showing combinations of stone and brick. In one of these the fireplace is recessed, the side walls of brick slant inwards, an old Sussex iron back being framed in the brickwork. There is a wide, low frame of local sandstone with good

mouldings, these giving a slight arching to the otherwise square opening. Outside of this are two square pilasters, formed of large blocks of sandstone, carried up to the ceiling. The space between is filled with stone, with two shallow broad niches with depressed arches, the backs being filled with bricks, placed alternately one on side and two on edge. In another instance the stone surround is flush with the wall, quite plain, except for the mouldings at the opening, carried round the top and halfway down the jambs. There is a decorated oblong panel at the top, and this, with the stone surround, is marked off from the wall by a thin earthenware border, decorated with oblique flutings. The fireplace is lined with small red bricks, the wing walls at a slant. A plain stone kerb is used. In a third instance we have a square opening, with a narrow edging of stone, the plain wood panelling flat against the wall, with an independent shelf supported by a stout cornice. The fireplace is lined with bricks, the wing walls straight, but in this case these wing walls are brought well forward, clear of the stone surround, the top part being cut off at an angle, this leaving a tiny triangular shelf, supported by



Turkish Faience Chimneypiece, 18th Century.

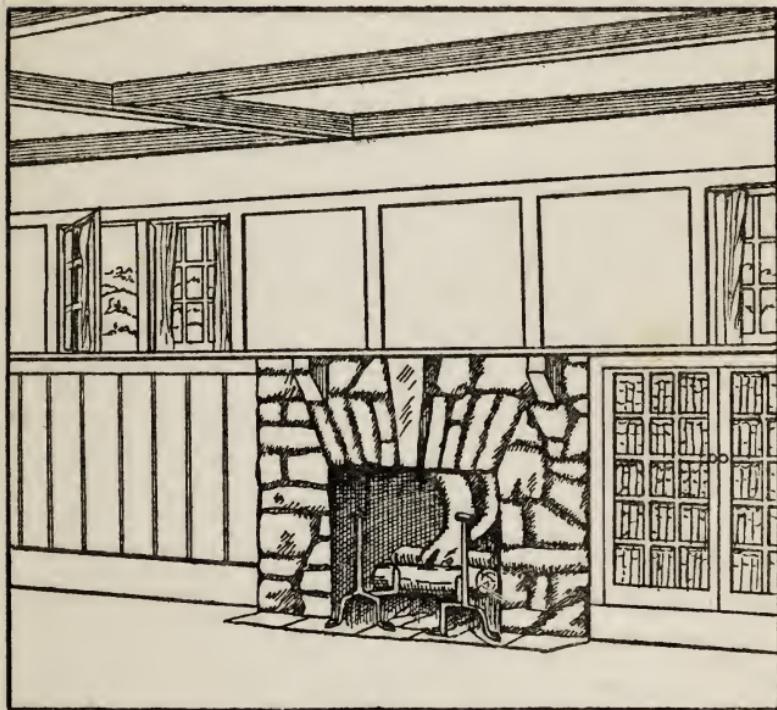
the column of brick below on each side. This fireplace has a semi-circular kerb of sandstone. Wherever possible, old Sussex iron fire-backs have been sunk in the brick-work.

It is certainly satisfactory to find the growing desire to use local materials as much as possible, not merely on the score of greater economy, but in the belief that in this way true individuality and fitness to surroundings may be attained. There is a good deal to be said in support of such a theory, which, in olden days imposed by circumstances, was swept away when improved transport facilities brought in a reign of white marble.

A thoroughly decorative treatment of brick and tile is to be seen at Marrowells, Oatland Chase, Walton-on-Thames, where Mr A. Winter Rose has some very original chimney-pieces in a pretty house of Early Georgian type. As regards the interior treatment the idea has been to accentuate craftsmanship as applied to appropriate materials. In the oak panelled dining-room we have a fireplace with a wide, low opening, surrounded by narrow stone framing, enriched with plain mouldings. The space is partly filled with

red brick walls, having a recess in the middle, in which the metal grate is placed. This chimneypiece is at the end of the room, in a kind of recess formed by a great cross-beam, supported by two free and two engaged oak columns, resting on bases partly formed of bricks. This note of simplicity is in sharp contrast to the fine panelling and enriched plaster ceiling. On the first landing, where we also find oak columns on brick bases, there is a curious recessed fireplace, reminding one of Romanesque practice. It is of brick and stone, decoratively treated, with depressed arch, black and white stone hearth, an iron fire-back, and plain fire-basket. A more decorative type has a plain wood flat surround, a slightly projecting shelf, with a semi-circular protruberance in the middle, supported by a carved wood head and wings of a cherub. The opening is filled flush with small square glazed tiles, surrounded by a tall, narrow chimney frame with copper, and with copper tray. In front of the well is a hearth of large glazed tiles. But we come to a thoroughly fresh note with the corner fireplace. As will be seen by our illustration, it is placed in the angle of a room, and is a decorative treatment of plain bricks and

terra-cotta, with brick hearth and black kerb. The idea is again carried out by the stepped brick supports for the overhead beam.



FIELD STONE COTTAGE FIREPLACE.

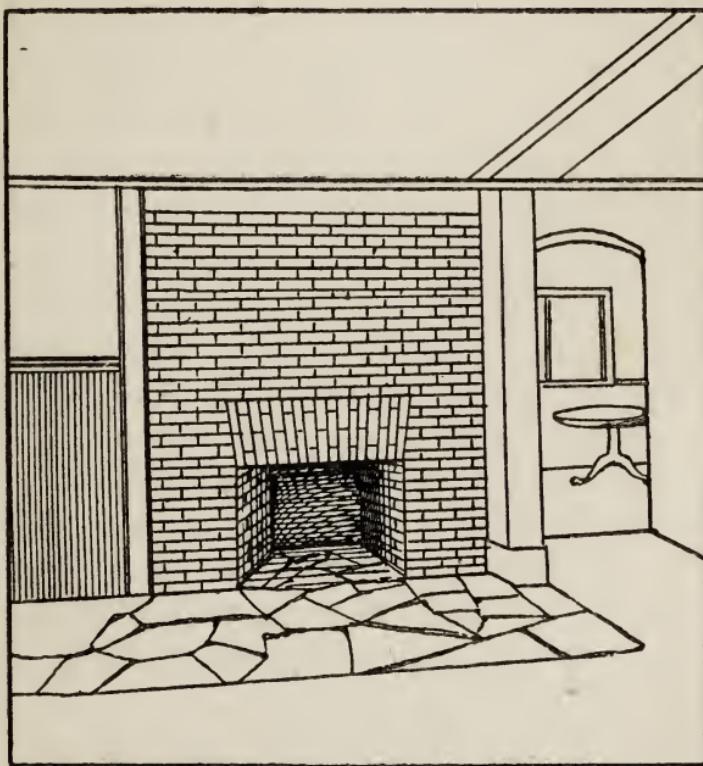
Fireplaces placed as the one last described in angles of rooms have once more come into favour, both for country houses and town flats. They have the advantage of taking up little room, and also facilitating

the arrangement of flues and chimney-stacks, by making backing somewhat easier.

Sir R. S. Lorimer has a striking design of this type at Ardkinglas, Argyllshire. The chimneypiece, of carved stone, is placed in the angle of a dressing-room, which is lined with a high dado of stone. The hearth is raised, with a semi-circular kerb and brick floor. Both walls are lined with small bricks. Flat pillar jambs, with prominent pedestals and capitals, project into the room and support a straight breast, adorned over the opening with a scalloped fan in half circle. Above this is a flat cornice and a hood carried in two sections sharply back to the wall. The fire is carried in a small basket, the front semi-circular, with vertical bars, the back angled, this being suspended against the brick walls nearly halfway up between the hearth and the lintel. It is a very interesting treatment of the subject, quite in keeping with a stone-built house designed on rather severe lines, differing considerably from Mr Winter Rose's solution; also from the more elaborate specimens at Hampton Court, and coming closer in feeling to the work of Smithson at Bolsover Castle.

In the "week-end" cottage and "simple

life" suburban house, brick chimneypieces in connection with plain distempered or panelled walls have become popular. A charming arrangement of this kind, includ-



AMERICAN USE OF BRICK AND FIELD STONES.

ing a hood and shelf and cosy corner, is sketched in our chapter on "Ingle Nooks."

In America the simple note of the unconcealed brick has also been utilised. Mr

C. K. Klauder, in a house which he has designed and constructed for himself at Mount Airy, Philadelphia, has a plain brick breast with arched opening in a panelled room, the only adornment being a plain shelf, supported on square billets jutting out from the wall. Mr Howard Shaw, in a house he built at Forest Lake, Illinois, has two heavy brick pillars rising from floor to ceiling, a broad straight lintel, and a recessed breast, all in plain brick. In our sketch we show an even more direct employment of brick. The hearth of broken field stones shows another tendency springing up in America, of building the fireplace itself of rough field stones. This is shown in a second sketch, though examples of far more irregular treatment of the stones could be found. It is, of course a conventionalised reminiscence of the rough stone chimneypiece built by settlers in old log huts.

One of the remarkable innovations in building economics of recent years has been the introduction of artificial stones. This has proved of immense benefit, because these materials are moulded, not carved, obviously a much cheaper process. Moreover, they are uniform in character and appearance,

therefore strong, durable, and presenting no "faults" to worry the sculptor. Some of these stones are more correctly called reconstructed than artificial, as they are actually produced from the débris of natural stones, which are disintegrated, treated chemically, and then under tremendous pressure reconstituted into practically the original stone, whether granular or metamorphic, but really more hard, compact, and without a flaw. This process is specially successful with the oolitic and magnesian limestones, though capable of far wider application. Indeed, another process of a similar kind provides us with reconstructed marble. Now, in the process of compression, the stone is moulded into blocks, slabs, pilasters, pillars, consoles, pediments, cornices, and so on. In this way very elaborate decorative work can be secured in hard stones and marbles at quite a cheap rate, certainly less costly and better in detail than when inferior carving is utilised. Where the ultra smoothness and regularity of the mould is objected to, slight tooling may be utilised to give the finishing touch. Remarkably fine chimneypieces have been produced by these various processes, both

when a single material or a mixture of stones has been required. This moulding, whether or not bearing the tool marks of the stonemason finisher, is certainly far in advance artistically to the boxed marble, granite and slate-work for chimneypieces. Where moderate expenditure and saving of time are essential, these reconstructed stones and marbles are genuine acquisitions. Even if the reproduction of the artist's design is mechanical, it makes it possible to bring the design within the reach of those of slender purses.

Coming within the category of artificial stones is concrete, which, with its top dressing of cement variously manipulated, often masquerades as stone, marble or granite. Concrete is now being extensively used for the construction of fireplaces in England, but even more commonly so in America, where the concrete-built house, even of considerable size and claims to architectural importance, is becoming quite an institution. Such fireplaces are sometimes moulded *in situ*, being made monolithic with the walls; sometimes built up of moulded members, in the same way as hollow and solid blocks and slabs are used.

Sometimes the concrete for the fireplaces has a specially selected aggregate chosen, and then the material stands confessed for what it is; or it may be finished with a dressing of fine sand concrete, or of a cement drying with a hard polished surface, colouring then often being introduced. When a special concrete is used for the fireplace—generally a hard drying cement, with fine sand, small pebble, or crushed stone aggregate—panels, cornices and other decorations are introduced by employing shaped moulds, or by pressing dies for panels and similar ornaments, and running mould patterns for producing cornices on the material when formed, but before it has quite set.

Another method which has its many advocates, is to embed terra-cotta or carved stone panels, or encaustic tiles, in the wet concrete. When the jambs, lintel, and breast are further decorated with plain depressed or raised mouldings, this has a very good effect. With encaustic tiles we may have merely panels or borders, leaving the rest of the surface, cemented or not, visible. On the other hand the tiles are also applied lavishly, so as to cover the whole surface, perhaps leaving narrow bands of the

concrete uncovered. The cement of the concrete is sometimes coloured. This encrusted decoration, which may approach in its elaboration to mosaic work, small tiles of different colours being used, has suggested another and more natural form of ornamentation.

Partly as a result of that search for simplicity already noted, partly of that other desire, to allow the material used to tell its own tale, attention has been devoted to embellishing the material itself. One way was to colour the cement. If this is done judiciously, delightful harmonies and contrasts may be obtained with the mottled chimney-pieces and the distempered or panelled walls. Combinations may range in warm tints from light yellow browns to reddish brown cement with flint or white sandstone aggregate, or we may have a quiet tone of green cement with brown or white aggregate and fumed or dark oak wall panelling. From tinting the cement and using the aggregate as a foil, the next step was to pay particular attention to the artistic possibilities of the aggregate itself, and to accentuate its special beauties. Suitably coloured marbles or granites and the commoner forms of agates are chosen,

broken into large or small pieces as desired, but usually as thin and with as smooth flat surfaces as possible. Commonly ordinary concrete is used for the foundation work, and the concrete with the selected aggregate is put on as a surface dressing, of course while the body is still wet, in order to secure perfect cohesion, which is further promoted by leaving the under surface rough. When the top dressing has nearly set firm, it is scrubbed with a hard bristle or wire brush and acidulated water, the object being to remove part of the cement and expose the coloured surface of the aggregate. When the scraping has been carried far enough, the surface is washed with clear water, to remove every trace of acid, and so prevent continued chemical action, other than the natural ones accompanying the hardening and dehydration of the cement. If a good choice has been made of the aggregate, very beautiful as well as strikingly original effects may be obtained. Some of these chimneypieces look as though they were made of slices of those conglomerate agates, of the "plum pudding" type. To enhance this latter effect the cement may be of the hard, polished surface-drying class, such as "Parian," and tinted; then the

scrubbing process is very gentle, no acid being used in the water, the finishing operation being burnishing. As a rule, however, a roughish, rustic finish is preferred. Very frequently this surface treatment is adopted in combination with the embedding of terra-cotta plaques or carved stone panels.

One advantage of this method is that endless variety may be secured with very little trouble, and at next to no expense. Fossiliferous drifts, agates from the sea-shore, stalactites from quarries will produce variety that may be pleasantly reminiscent. For the chimneypieces could be constructed on the same lines as those adopted by an eccentric house-builder on the outskirts of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, who had the outer walls of his concrete dwelling encrusted with stones, shells, petrified wood, minerals, pebbles, and other odds and ends gathered from places in nearly every State of the Union which he had visited during a period of twenty years. This is, indeed, a humble imitation of the chimneypiece building methods of Pope Pius VII., who, as we have mentioned in the preceding chapter, utilised fragments of ancient sculpture and vivid

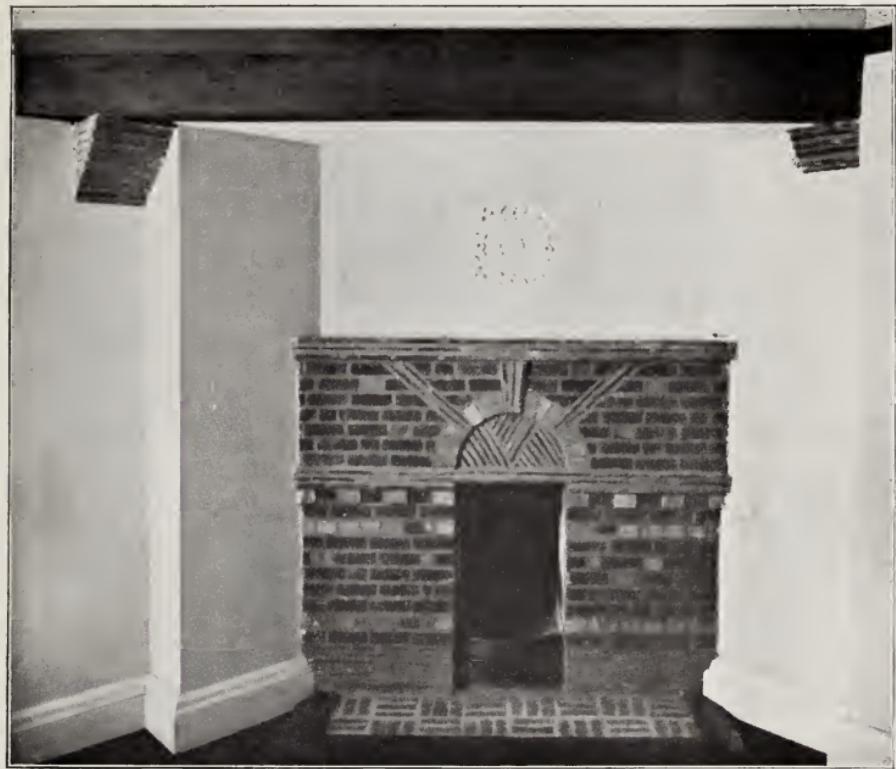
mosaics to enrich the one he presented to Napoleon Bonaparte.

When no attempt is made to disguise the fact that the chimneypieces are of concrete, the design ought to be characterised by perfect simplicity of outline and plain mouldings, preferably rounded. When the style of handling is adhered to, the semi-plastic nature of the material is respected. In other words, the decoration of concrete should suggest the work of the inlayer and moulder, not that of the carver, and the more conspicuous the feature the more closely should this be observed. Although this aspect of the subject is comparatively unimportant in England as yet, it is likely to come into greater prominence with the rapidly increasing employment of concrete as a material for house-building.

Terra-cotta, both glazed and unglazed, is fast coming into use for chimneypieces beautiful moulding being obtainable in this material at moderate cost. In both types excellent colour schemes can be devised, the unglazed providing many shades of yellows, browns, and reds, while the glazed gives a full range of colours in sober tints. The two combine together very well. This

material is admirably suited to more or less monumental fireplaces for the reception rooms of public buildings, and also for halls of private residences when a somewhat formal style of decoration is adopted.

Great advance has been made in the manufacture and ornamentation of encaustic tiles, slabs, and blocks, and these are largely used for chimney-pieces. Here, too, we have both modelling and moulding of plastic material, here decorated with permanent colours, flat, sunk, or embossed embellishments. For every chimney-piece made solely of glazed earthenware, with brick fireplace lining, at least a hundred have encaustic tiles blended with other materials, these, as we have seen, consisting of brick, stone, wood, enamelled iron and concrete. Apart from their cleanliness and brightness, and the assistance they afford in carrying out decorative colour schemes, they are excellent reflectors of light and heat. The purity and uniformity of colouring obtained with modern glazed earthenware has been a source of pride, but it is sometimes felt that this uniformity may amount to hardness and this purity to crudity. For this reason leadless glazed ware is often preferred, as by



Brick Angle Fireplace, by Mr. A. Winter Rose.

this process there is always a certain difference of density in colouring, with occasional more marked and unexpected variations, which give the products a real artistic value, like the *sang de bœuf* red of Golf Juan. This leadless glaze is, of course, applicable equally to tiles, panels, friezes, and moulded blocks. We remember noting a remarkable contrast on one occasion. A handsome chimneypiece in tawny brown lead - glazed earthenware, decorated with finely moulded floral and figure ornamentation in relief, and having vivid red lustre panels, which stood out richly as a fitting piece for a stately hall ; then a chimneypiece in blue and green leadless glazed ware, the colours soft, varying in intensity, blending with each other, producing a beautiful harmony, as interesting in its gradations as it was restful to the eye. Where tiles are used in narrow bands, or to obtain a vivid note of colour or jewel effect, lead - glazed ware should be chosen, but when the tiles, or panels, are used in mass, the leadless glaze is more beautiful and infinitely more interesting.

Little need be said of the cast iron chimneypieces, jambs, lintel, and shelf, some-

times overmantel, all in one piece. They are economical and frequently of very good design, can be enamelled any colour to suit other decorations, and make acceptable surrounds for enamelled and encaustic tiles, bricks, or stone. But there is no disguising the harshness of outline associated with a blurring of detail when elaborate designs are attempted. They fill a useful place, and are an improvement on much of the rule of thumb handiwork of a generation ago.

Examples might be multiplied indefinitely, but we have said enough to give an idea of the freedom with which the subject is treated in these days, and the sincerity with which it is approached by all architects anxious to rise above the commonplace.

CHAPTER XII.

THE “INGLE - NOOK.”

WHILE the term *ingle-nook* is modern, the thing itself is old enough, for the chimney-corner was early contrived by comfort-loving man, when the fireplace began to be enclosed by side walls and crowned with a hood. As we have seen while examining various specimens of the Gothic and Renaissance periods, the necessity for having large hearths to burn big logs and faggots of wood, and then to provide bigger smoke - collecting hoods and protecting walls in large draughty common halls, resulted in the building of small rooms within large ones. Those who were attending the fire and cooking pots or roasting spit naturally stood on the hearth, within the walls and under the hood. It was a position that had its charms on cold raw nights, and when quiet gossip had to be

exchanged, so the placing of a settle against the inner side wall came about, and then the host and hostess assumed the privilege of occupying these seats, sitting sociably side by side, as in the example from Prittlewell, or on benches placed on opposite sides of the hearth. Here confidences were exchanged, grave counsel debated, and light gossip indulged in. It provided the privy cabinet just away from the domestic forum of the hall.

It is interesting to compare these provisions for the amenities of conversation with those prevailing among the Greeks and Romans. Dark winter days and chilly nights suggested to peoples of cold climes the hearth as the fitting place to meet side by side, face to face, and chat over matters in particular, or discourse on matters at large. The Greeks and Romans also sat side by side, face to face, but on the semi-circular exedræ, originally recessed seats built in the porticoes, even in the gardens, and then in the long galleries provided for summer and winter exercise.

As a thing of actual utility, the chimney corner saw its heyday in the Middle Ages, when the hearth was raised one or more

steps from the floor, the wing walls brought well into the hall, and even turned at right angles for a short distance when they reached the end of the hearthstone, thus producing a perfect recess, while the hood was placed high enough to enable a man to stand upright within it. But when builders began to improve on their methods, and such comforts as door screens, panelled walls and heavy tapestries were introduced, the day of the cosy corner was waning. The wing walls gradually dwindled away to column supports or to mere wall pilasters, with brackets extending under the projecting hoods. In inns and the living rooms of farmhouses, however, the chimney corner still continued to be required and was provided long after such things had been discarded when new mansions were being built or old ones remodelled.

It was from the farmhouse that the revival of the chimney corner, the advent of the ingle-nook came about; though in one form it is due to the introduction into our sitting rooms of carved screens from the East, which suggested an improvement on the folding doors dividing our suites of reception rooms, separating the larger general from the smaller and more private.

But types are many, and sub-divisions of those types endless; we can only consider some of the most characteristic and usefully suggestive. Probably the most alluring of modern contrivances are those of homely design, having the appearance of some natural excrescences with which men and women surround themselves for their own convenience and pleasure. In many cases, however, more ambitious constructional aims are apparent. For instance, we sometimes see in large halls, of say the neo-classic, Georgian, or Empire styles, an alcove with an opening formed by a depressed arch springing from pilasters. Such alcoves are usually provided with a handsome monumental fireplace, while benches are built round the walls, or settees placed against them. Usually, too, there are windows on each side of the alcove, which may be square or semi-circular, the windows opening breast high, or carried nearly from floor to cornice, even occasionally opening into a garden or conservatory, or on to a terrace. This, it may be said, is placing a chimneypiece in an alcove, quite a good idea in itself, rather than providing an ingle-nook. Perhaps the same remark applies to the curious arrange-

ment of a bedroom-boudoir. The sleeping apartment was large, the sitting-room a small adjunct, placed in an alcove, the half of an octagon in shape, some two steps below the bedroom floor level, and built over a portico. The partition wall was mostly cut away, while two fluted Doric columns, springing from the end of a low wall, supported a deep panelled frieze. The low wall was continued to the partition, where engaged Doric columns were placed. In the opening between these dwarf parapet walls, provided with cornice ledges, and the columns were two long, broad, shallow steps. Facing this opening was a pleasant white enamelled wood chimneypiece, with an inner border of glazed tiles. Long, low, leaded casements were placed on four sides of the room.

Still in this class is the cosy corner provided by Mr O. P. Milne in the panelled billiard-room of Huntercombe Place, Oxfordshire, a house already referred to in these pages. The fireplace, a broad, low one in carved stone, with panel above, is placed at the end of a rather deep alcove, 12 ft. wide by 7 ft. deep, which is built out from the side of the house, with wooden backed benches against the walls and a movable

settee placed in front. There are no windows in this case.

Another successful way of dealing with a billiard-room chimneypiece is to be seen in the Ivy Club at Princeton University. It is placed in a fairly deep arched alcove, two steps above the floor. The fireplace is recessed, is of white stone, plainly dressed, the wide breast being arched, the interior lined with bricks. Above the breast is a broad band of red bricks, with three small arched niches, surrounded by a projecting cornice with flat shelf top. The rest of the walls are panelled, but over the wood box-seats with leather cushions, placed at an angle to give a view of the tables, the walls are upholstered with leather. Non-players are thus out of the way, where they may chat and look on at the games in comfort.

Very good effects may be produced by raising the hearth merely slightly above the floor level, or as in the above instance, several steps high. While this adds to the decorative value of the fireplace and its immediate surroundings, it does not always add to the comfort of those in the main part of the hall or room, and is, besides, quite unsuited for certain styles of interior

decoration. This device should not be abused.

In a house at Caterham, where red brick, distempered walls and plain sawn white wood stained green are the prevailing materials, Mr Barry Parker and Mr Raymond Unwin have provided an ideal arrangement. The fireplace, with red brick tile and a semi-circular projecting low and narrow hood of red brick, with arched opening and flat top covered with a green stained wooden shelf, is placed in the middle of an alcove, contrived in a recess, framed by great square beams of wood and a screen arch. Above the fireplace is a projecting cupboard, in three parts, the centre carried to the ceiling, the side wings only half way up, with flat tops. These are of white wood stained green, with long hinge-guards of red copper, and narrow panels of glass. The end walls are panelled with green stained wood cupboards, having an arched recess beneath, with shelf, whence the panelling is carried down at a slant to low box benches, provided with red cushions. The floor is paved with narrow blue glazed tiles. The uncovered parts of the back wall are distempered with a high dado in peacock blue,

and a greyish blue above. The ceiling is partly panelled, partly distempered.

Another happy design of these two architects is to be seen in a low ceiled plaster and stained beam living-room at Mansfield. This, too, is in a spacious alcove, the opening being spanned by a great beam resting on two block brackets and supporting a narrow screen wall. The walls are panelled with narrow planks, and there is a flat shelf with distempered walls above. Shaped wing guards end the plain cushioned benches on the room side. The fireplace is recessed, with an arched opening and a rounded breast, terminating at the panelled level, where it is continued as a square projection, with a framed picture in front, to the ceiling. Against the back wall there is a second range of shelves for books.

In some chambers built by Mr Reginald Morphew in Jermyn Street, W., there is a pleasant ingle-nook, recessed in the thickness of the wall. The opening is framed on one side with a single square wood post, on the other with two, supporting a large square beam, which in turn supports a narrow screen wall rising to the ceiling. The fireplace is of plain marble, flush with the wall,

with narrow shelf, the opening being filled with small glazed tiles and a narrow grate with copper hood. A marble sharp-angled kerb is provided. The back wall, divided into narrow panels by slender flat fillets of stained wood, is distempered. The space between the two posts on one side is panelled with narrow boards, about 4 ft. 6 in. high, and pierced with two heart-shaped peepholes. On the opposite side there is a shaped guard board, with a short upright post at the end, which projects above the board and terminates in a square top. Behind these screens are two shelf seats, cushioned, and with cushioned backs.

Mr E. Guy Dawber, in a cottage dining-room panelled with Austrian light oak, provides a very attenuated but at the same time decorative version of the cosy corner. The ingle-nook is contrived in the thickness of the panelling. The hearth is raised, the centre part projecting into the room. A low, wide opening is provided for the fire, and is lined with very narrow glazed bricks. An oblong wrought iron barred fire-basket is provided with projecting uprights in copper, with copper ovals placed vertically, thus producing the effect of an open hearth

with andirons. The wall to the right and left and above the opening for about a foot is covered with glazed tiles. This is framed by heavy oak moulding, arranged as a cornice, with flat ledge over the fire. The rest of the wall is panelled, decorated with mouldings, with a little plain inlay of darker coloured wood. Over the opening of this recess there is an oak border, with scrolled fretwork border, and a slight projecting cornice. Above this is a plain frieze, broad, flat, reaching to the flat ceiling, which is ornamented with an enriched plaster border all round the room.

A flat in Buckingham Street, Strand, contains a delightfully comfortable, picturesque ingle-nook that must prove a sore trial to the ghost of formal Robert Adam, if it ever wanders away from the neighbouring Adelphi. The fireplace is of red bricks, with a low rectangular opening, and is surrounded by richly carved dark oak panelling, fitted with numerous small shelves and two little projecting cabinets with lead-glazed doors. The cosy corner is contrived by two wings of carved oak panelling, about 3 ft. high, two small pillars rising from the projecting moulding and supporting a

Inglenook, by Mr. A. Winter Rose.



projecting cornice, above which is a truncated conical hood, built of planks, and ending in another cornice. The wide opening is spanned by narrow arched beams, while the side spaces between the panelling and the hood are filled with lead glazing.

A modification of this is seen in the drawing-room of a house at Rushington, Sussex, built by Mr R. Heywood Haslam. It is intended to guard against the draughts from two doors, one in the end wall and one in the side wall at the end, this last leading into the hall. This part of the room is partly cut off by a pendant screen wall, with a panelled frieze provided with three arches, two leading to the doors mentioned, the middle one to the ingle-nook. The fireplace is of glazed tiles, with copper bands and panel surround, this panelling being carried at right angles to form wing walls. These wings are terminated by square wooden beams, rising to the arched frieze, and about eighteen inches from these are two more similar pillars, each pair joined together by low panel walls about three feet high. The free opening between the two pairs of pillars is about six feet. Benches are fitted up inside. Above the fireplace, carried from panel

to panel, is a glazed bookcase, with flat top, used as a shelf.

This reminds us of a suggestion put forward by Mr G. G. Samson for a five-roomed bungalow. The main entrance is by way of a verandah through a lobby into the large living room. An L-shaped lobby is provided to give communication between the living room, two of the bedrooms, and the kitchen. The lower angle of the lobby is cut off by two slanting walls, and an opening is contrived into the sitting-room. Against the wall of the alcove is the fireplace, which backs against that of the kitchen. Benches with wing guards complete the ingle-nook.

Mr P. Morley Horder's drawing - room ingle-nook at Hengrove, near Wendover, is a fairly spacious secondary chamber, occupying a kind of alcove, not quite the full width of the apartment, the inner corner being taken up by part of the entrance hall. The whole room is panelled by oak, and the alcove is formed by two beams decorated with narrow panels, supporting a crossbeam. Attached to the side of the uprights are two low panelled screened walls, forming the ends to two box benches, with panelling behind

them. On the inner wall the panelling is carried up to a narrow shelf just below the deep frieze. On the outer side there is a small window above the bench. The chimney breast on the back wall projects into the alcove, and is carried to the ceiling. The lower part is of red brick, framed with wood, and having a narrow shelf supported by flat brackets above. The hearth is raised, and the fire is placed in a tall niche with rounded metal hood in a recess under a very beautiful arch, outlined on its outer edge by a thin double moulding. The recessed spaces on either side of the fireplace are filled with bookshelves to the level of the seats.

Another booky-nook was designed by Mr Klauder for his before-mentioned cottage at Mount Airy. It is an alcove in the living room, formed by great flat balks of timber, two uprights and a crossbeam, in keeping with the rest of the panelling. The back wall is of red brick, the fire being contained in a recess under a depressed arch, with narrow bracket-supported shelf above. Partly behind the upright balks, and partly behind low panelled screens, are two roomy box benches, with panelled backs, and above these are bookcases. There are narrow

windows on each side of the fireplace, throwing light on the rows of favourite volumes.

Elsewhere we have mentioned fireplaces placed in angles of rooms. Mr A. W. Brewill has combined this idea with an ingle-nook screen. This is also a case of dealing with a billiard-room. The hearth is of stone, provided with fire-dogs. There are no jambs, but the hood is in the form of a broad breast, some three feet from the ground, with wedge-shaped keystones, an ornamented cornice with flat shelf, and a recessed breast to the ceiling. On the two walls are small, square, recessed windows, with lead glazing and small draw-back curtains. The ingle-nook screen consists of two square carved wood pillars, on plain panelled bases, supporting a carved beam with cornice, the roof boarded over. The walls are of soft yellow-tinted magnesium Mansfield stone, the woodwork dark oak.

Mr G. L. Sutcliffe's pleasing notion of an ingle-nook for a country cottage of some pretensions is to build out an alcove in red brick, provide a fireplace on the plan of a half octagon, built straight up from floor to ceiling in red brick, with square fire-opening

and copper grate fittings, with an arched niche above, and two larger arched niches on the back wall. Against the side walls he places roomy wooden settees, with recessed lead-glazed windows above them. The opening into the room is framed by varnished wood uprights supporting a cross beam and an arched plank.

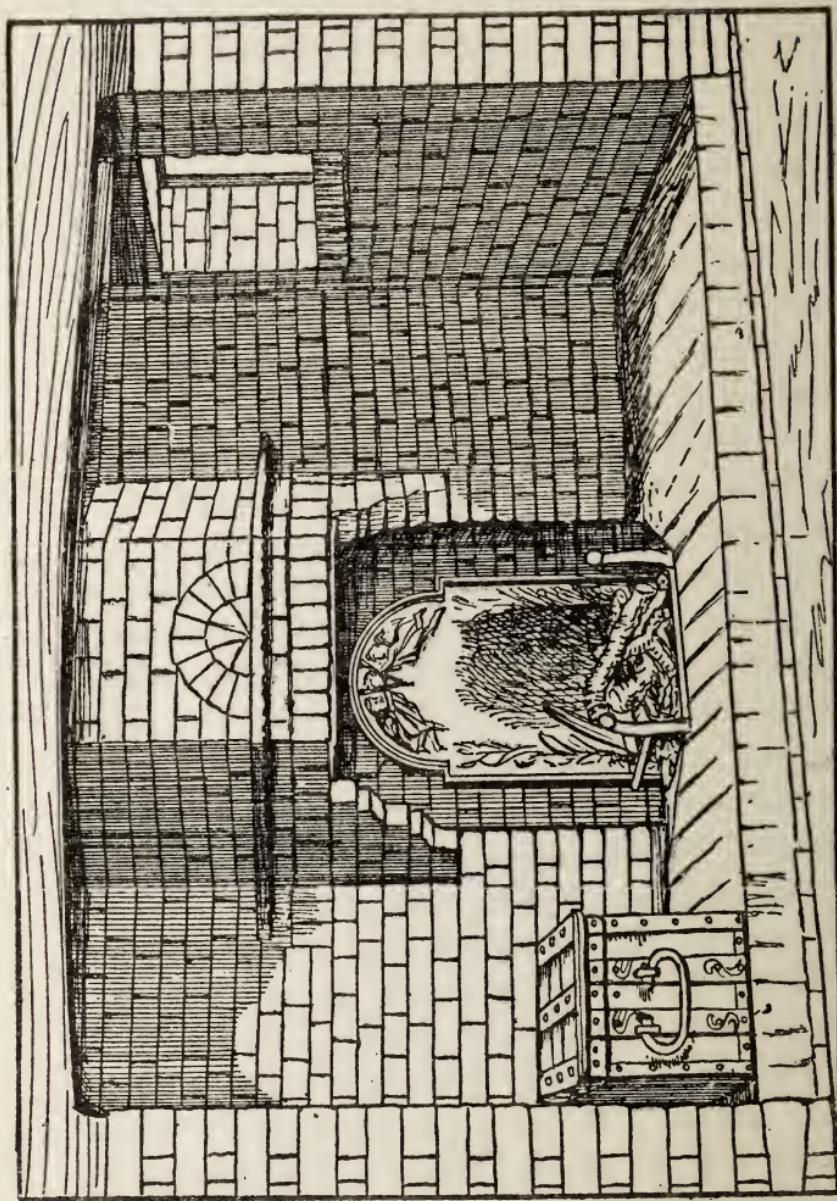
There is a great temptation to place windows as in the above cases, for there is an undeniable charm in being able to sit close to a cheerful fire and look out of the window at the same time. We have seen this idea carried so far that a window has been placed over the fireplace where the breast usually is, the flue being carried round. To be able to look over the chimney shelf at an ever-changing picture, instead of gazing at a never-varying one, is most attractive, especially when, as in this particular instance, the scene was a rough coast with the fickle sea beyond. But the temptation as a general rule should be resisted. If on the ground floor some quietly disposed persons may object to visitors, fleshly or ghostly, or even the long, lissome fingers of a trailer-rose, tapping, tapping, gently at the ingle-nook casement. Apart from

this, there is always the difficulty of excluding draughts. An ingle-nook is a place to be cosy in, not one in which to contract a crick in the neck. Here picturesqueness should undoubtedly give way to comfort.

It is not every ingle-nook design that furnishes sufficient room for side benches or chairs. For instance, in the dining-room of Walstead House, Lindfield, Sussex, Mr E. Turner Powell has an open raised hearth under a projecting canopy, the whole being placed in a wide, deep recess, lined with fancy moulded tiles, the lintel step-joggled with central wedge-shaped keystone. Very cold mortals might sit on cushions under protection of the chambranle. The same notion is seen in another design of Mr Parker and Mr Unwin for a modest cottage at Letchworth Garden City. The chimney-piece is a massive structure of red brick, built flush with the plastered walls. The hearth is raised and there is a considerable recess, arched over by a great beam of wood. Terminating the brick structure at the level of the picture rail, is a narrow shelf, with plain bracket supports. The fire is further recessed in the brick wall and is covered by a round metal hood, with conical top and

wall guards. Cushions are placed on the raised platform. Even more primitive is the fireplace contrived by Mr W. A. Forsyth for Mr Norman Forbes Robertson's week-end cottage at Wittersham, Kent, and shown in the sketch overleaf, perhaps with too hard angularity to do justice to the original. The nook is delightful, the fire-back a genuine Sussex "find."

Hampstead Garden suburb presents several types of the glorified cottage style of ingle-nook. For instance, a cottage by Mr Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin in Temple Fortune Lane, has a fireplace, placed on a raised hearth, in a deep, brick-lined recess, about 10 ft. long by four and a half high, with a wood beam lintel, with small shelf over. The fire is in an iron barred basket, placed under a metal hood communicating with the chimney throat. Then in Meadway we find a low, timber ceilinged, hall-living-room in a charming cottage by Mr M. H. Baillie Scott, with a fireplace occupying nearly half the side of the room. It is rather under 5 ft. high, and about 20 ft. wide. The lintel is a broad beam, with a narrow shelf supported by plain brackets. The actual fire-



KENTISH COTTAGE INGLE-NOOK.

place is on a square raised hearthstone, with slightly recessed back. On both sides of this are two small recessed windows. A peculiarity of this room is that on the side wall next to the fireplace there is a recess, the full length and height of the room, with slightly raised floor, wooden dado and recessed window, used as a dining-room. Behind the cornice is a rod with curtains, which can be drawn together if desired.

At other times the ingle-nook is a one-sided arrangement. An example of this style is Mr G. L. Sutcliffe's design for a country house library fireplace, which is built within a long strip alcove, or rather projection on the side of the room. It is of red brick, the solid walls built up on a raised semi-circular platform, and topped with beaten copper hood, surrounded by copper plate wall guards and a narrow shelf. The one seat is placed under a small window against the end wall close to the fireplace, and with wing guards flush with the panelling of the walls. In the billiard-room of an American private house we find another version of the semi-alcove for fireplace. A raised tiled platform has a low carved wood balustrade at one end, at the other, against

the two walls, hung with silk below a deep painted frieze, is a comfortable divan, with cushions, half shielded by a narrow wall and pillar rising to the beam and hanging screen wall. The fireplace is of dressed stone, flush with the wall, above which is a carved wooden shelf and a projecting panelled chimney breast.

We have already had occasion to mention Mr Winter Rose's columned fireplace at Marrowells, and it is also shown in one of our plates. It will be seen that it forms a peculiar type of ingle-nook, possessing a simple dignity that recommends it to the judicious, for a room where some stateliness of aspect is desired. Though it is not everybody who will feel reconciled to the exposed brick, the arrangement certainly provides the semi-seclusion that we look for in this connection.

A very effective treatment of a large and lofty hall in a country house was designed by Mr Charles Plumet. Along one side, on the first floor, is a passage, and this has arched openings and a balustrade, overlooking the hall. Right at the end is a communicating gallery, with handsome carved wood rail and balustrade, and against the

wall a large bookcase. Under this gallery is the large fireplace, the hearth flush with the floor. It is of red brick, has a recessed fireplace, with straight cheeks and arched opening. Over this opening, 2 ft. above it, is a long panel of carved stone. White stone pillars, octagonal, with ornamental capitals and tall carved bases, stand on each side of the hearth, and support the gallery. On either side of them, under the gallery, the walls are lined with dwarf bookcases, and covered with framed pictures above. It should be mentioned that the walls are distempered, have a very deep frieze, consisting of a heavy fringe of foliage and fruit, with an arabesque filling above, reaching to the flat timbered ceiling. The floor is of parquet. Here we have comfort and dignity most happily blended. The great expanse of plain walls, broken on one side by tall windows, on the other by the arches and balustrade, contrast well with the strong design and colouring of the frieze, while the pillared chimneypiece, with the gallery overhead, gives an air of originality and distinction.

This screened-off effect is attained in a different way in another room of the

Buckingham Street flat already referred to. In this second room, which is all white, a narrow strip at the top end, is cut off by a handsome carved wood Moorish screen, above which is deep frieze of enriched plaster. The chimneypiece, a simple wooden framing to a glazed tile fireplace, and crowned by a carved wood Moorish overmantel, is in the middle of the wall, facing the arched opening. About this chairs and small tables are disposed.

One more point requires to be mentioned. In many halls with staircases, the chimneypiece is placed against the wall in such a way as to be partially screened by the sweep of the stairs, and then the primary requirements for an ingle-nook are ready to hand. It is merely necessary to place bench, hooded or with tall panelled back, within the sweep, and another screened bench, or merely a sofa, on the opposite side, and there is a delightful retreat, placed practically immediately within the portals, as in days of old.

In an American example, a house at Dedham, Massachusetts, built of local fireproof brick and limestone, the library is a delightfully designed room, both as to

planning and colouring. The ceiling, wall panelling and shelving for books are of weathered English oak; the floor is paved with unglazed tiles of a dull blue hue, which makes a splendid soft background for brown and red rugs. Unglazed tiles have a decided advantage over the glazed, if they be of sufficiently hard and homogeneous material, because they both look and feel warmer, and are less hard to tread and deaden the footfall. This colour scheme is completed by an uncovering, as it were, of the solid building material, for the fireplace is of carved white limestone, broad and tall. A great canopy hood projects well into the room, sheltering two roomy seats with windows over them.

An Austrian hunting-box designed by Herr Ludwig Hohlwein also gives a good combination out of very simple materials. The living-room is lined with plain polished oak fittings. The walls and ceiling are framed in sawn timber filled in with plaster panels. The chimneypiece is of carved oak, the hearth raised, and the fireplace of red glazed bricks, provided with iron fire-basket and heavy uprights with great copper cup-like terminals. A platform a few inches

above the floor is provided for the ingle-nook, which is formed by merely building up two wooden settees, with tall, almost straight backs, very slight cut-away wings, and plain shelf seat. The interior is comfortably upholstered. On each side of the fireplace is a deep recess, with a window in the upper part, the lower part forming useful shelves. This is undoubtedly a cosy corner, yet one which does not interfere with the warming of the rest of the room.

Of course in designing an ingle-nook, comfort must be a guiding consideration. Much can be done by means of judicious fittings. Certainly the shelf within easy reach is most necessary. It is desirable, when this is done, that it should be recessed, and preferably placed against the side wall. Bookshelves, if placed on the side or back, should also be recessed. If this cannot be done, then they must be narrow, and the space beneath them panelled to form the back or side of seat. Any projection which may be bumped against is to be avoided. On the outer side of the seat it is well to provide an arm rest, while for elderly people an arm rest in the form of a sling is a convenience. On the distaff side of the



Original Model of Chimneypiece, by Stevens.

hearth, beneath the arm rest, there ought to be a wide and deep pocket, a useful receptacle for needlework. Where the corner is roomy enough, it is a good plan to provide a collapsible desk, closing up into the panel and opening out at such angles as to provide a reading or writing desk, and if need be, a table for an invalid luncheon. Something quite simple will often serve the purpose: a hinged board, kept upright when not in use by a catch, supported when in use by one or two hinged brackets, folding back against the side. No ingle-nook in a dining-room, billiard-room, hall, or cottage living - room, should be without a hob or at all events a trivet, and when possible a little hot closet is not amiss.

With the ingle-nook in the living-room of a week-end cottage, or humble country *pied-a-terre*, the great question is how to fill the fireplace itself. From the sentimental and picturesque point of view the open hearth is the ideal. When the hearth is slightly raised and the hood efficient, all may go well perhaps for ninety-five days out of a hundred. But for the balance things are often very uncomfortable. The difficulty is that with the small cottage, whether

all ground floor or possessing an upper storey, the chimney is not very tall, and therefore does not draw powerfully under any circumstances, and does so very badly under certain conditions of wind, especially if a wood or a few big trees are close at hand. Snow and rain may also prove a source of annoyance. It is not every architect who dares to design a small cottage on the lines of that handsome Renaissance lodge by the late Mr W. Aden Nesfield at Kew Gardens, with a high pitched roof, equal in height to that of the walls, and a bold chimney shaft towering some one and a half times that height above the summit. Such a chimney would be out of the question in connection with most remodelling work, and usually so with the building of cheap bungalows or cottages. The result is that the hearth is too near the chimney top, and is therefore rather more under the direct influence of wind and rain than it should be. Bearing this in mind, it seems better to compromise the matter, and fit the open hearth with a closed-in grate, or with one or other of those useful and not unsightly combination grates and kitcheners which are on the market. Patterns can be chosen

which harmonise with their surroundings while giving security against floodings and the back-rush of smoke. Circumstances must determine the choice. Where expense is not a primary consideration, the modern plan of treating the fireplace as a self-contained feature—with its own jambs, lintel and hood, and even raised hearth, as we see in many of the examples already described—placed within the ingle-nook alcove, overcomes much of the difficulty under discussion, but it is not an economical method of designing.

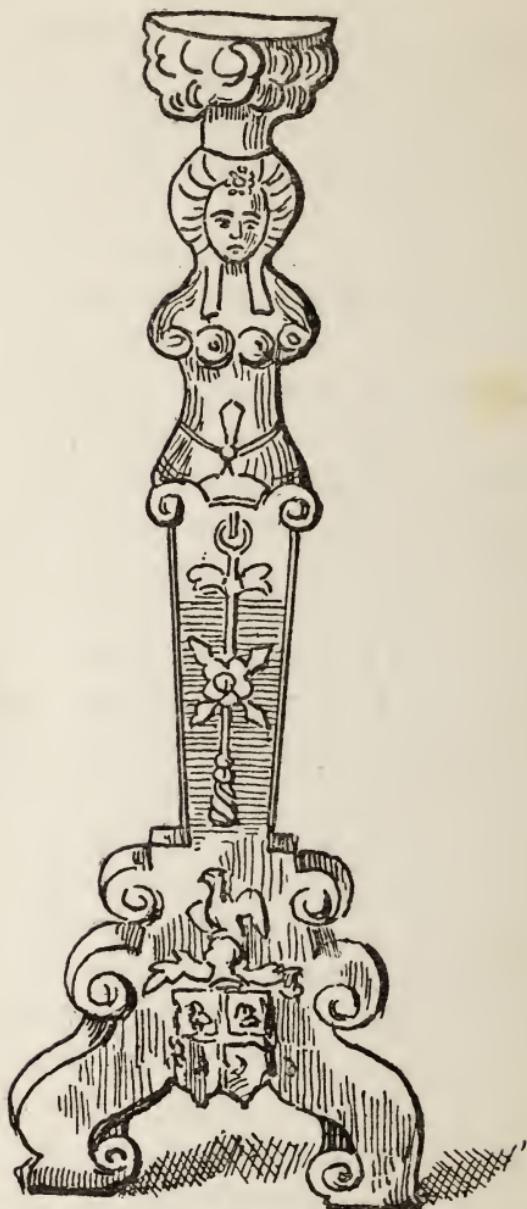
CHAPTER XIII.

NOTES ON FIREPLACE FURNITURE.

IN this chapter it is proposed only to touch upon such items of furniture as directly influenced, or were influenced by, the constructional parts of the fireplace.

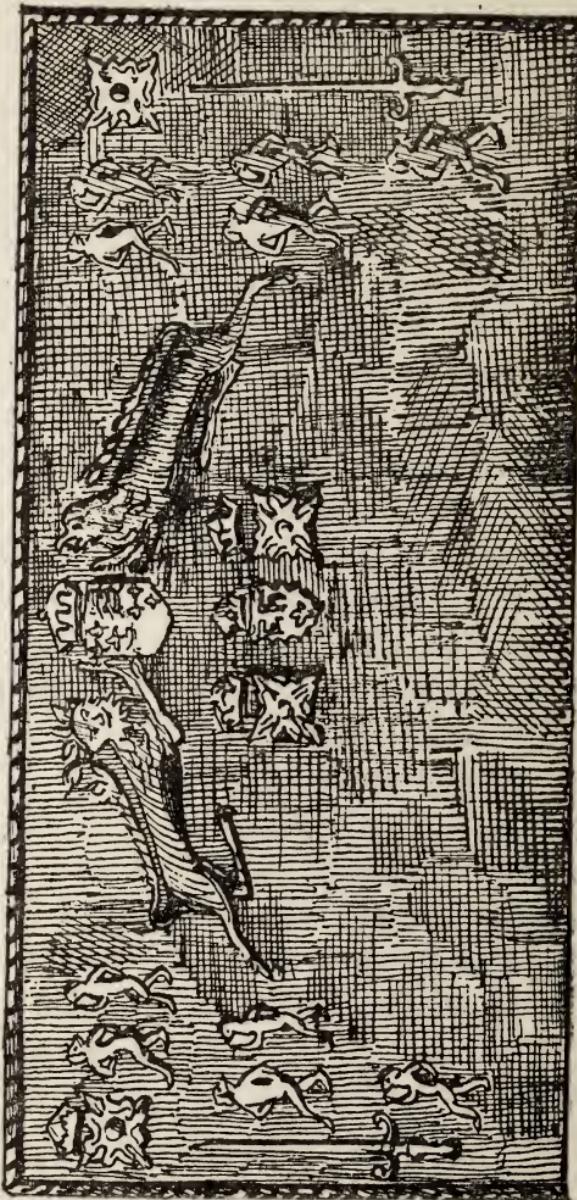
At first they were exceedingly simple, as were the hearths themselves. The early form of the andirons or fire-dogs for holding burning logs and faggots, were in the form of two uprights with spreading feet, and joined together by a crossbar. The wood was placed at a slanting angle against the horizontal bar, in that position usually adopted when quick ignition and a fierce flame is desired, and even now commonly adopted in the East. This method of building the wood fire was almost necessary when the open fireplace prevailed, but so soon as the recess in the wall was adopted, wing walls and hood

conducting to smoke exits quickly being added, it was easier to control the fire, and to burn logs both little and large. Then the horizontal position was preferred, and so two dogs were used. These were often plain structures of wrought iron bars and bands, but with the increased architectural importance given to the chimneypiece great pains were bestowed on these articles of furniture, and from the 12th to the 15th century they increased in size, intricacy, and beauty. From simple uprights, with hammered scroll embellishments, round bosses and shields were added, generally bearing sacred emblems or monograms. Then the founders took the matter up, and the uprights were cast in the shape of animals and human figures, either termini or complete statuettes. Many of them are very beautiful, and most possess value for details of costume and equipment. In England a great branch of the Sussex iron industry consisted in turning out fire-backs and dogs. The early patterns bore sacred emblems, then figures, and finally armorial shields and badges. Our illustration is of a Sussex andiron from Wadhurst, with Renaissance decorations and armorial shield. It stands 3 feet 3 inches high. A



OLD SUSSEX ANDIRON.

pair, dated 1591, evidently coming from the Ashburnham estate foundry, were decorated with the Ashburnham arms, and also a badge in the form of an ash tree growing out of a floreated coronet. In contrast to these we see a very primitive type shown in our sketch of Mr Norman Forbes Robertson's ingle-nook (page 198). More elaborate specimens will be seen in our illustration of an Italian stone chimneypiece, and those of Loseley, Holland House, and the Governor's Room, Charterhouse. In the two fireplaces of the Great Room at Holland House the furniture consists of two andirons, in forms of Corinthian gilt columns, standing on ornamental bases, with fine capitals supporting respectively the cross crosslets of the Copes and the *fleur de lis* of the Riches. The andirons are dainty little amoretti, carrying wands, and standing on substantial highly ornamented bases. These beautiful figures on their elaborated designed bases are of Continental origin. Iron was far from being the only metal used. Copper, brass, and even silver, were employed for this purpose. Andirons practically went out of fashion in England when coal took the place of wood, but they long continued in service on the



ARMORIAL SUSSEX FIRE-BACKS.

Continent, where they are still the necessary complements of fireplaces over more than half of Europe.

In early practice the fireplace was simply lined with stone or brick, but no doubt partly owing to the finer work bestowed on these, and the fiercer fires resulting from better construction, it was soon found expedient to strengthen the back with iron plates. The opportunity for decoration which these presented was not lost. Great pains were devoted to their manufacture, both on the Continent and here. We give two line drawings of different types—one from Sutton



SUSSEX FIRE-BACK, SUTTON HURST.

Hurst of 1582 and the other of earlier date. The subjects chosen for decorative treatment were, of course, extremely varied, ranging from mere lines and dots to elaborate scenes from the Scriptures and the fabulists. Occasionally historical scenes are introduced. In the 16th and 17th centuries heraldic ornamentation became the fashion. In England the Royal arms were frequently adopted as the central motif, but more generally the arms of the owner were cast on the plates. Some of the more elaborate patterns may be seen on the plates giving pictures of fire-places at Combe Abbey, Bruges, and that of Clodion and Gouthière from Paris. This last named is particularly interesting, because the entire back and sides are covered with highly ornamented plates of iron, with concave pieces filling up the angles—a very rare treatment. In some Flemish examples we find the combined use of decorated cast-iron backs with ornamental glazed tiles. It is probable that we owe this method of surface treatment to the Hispano-Mauresque school of builders. It corresponds to their general scheme of decoration, and we know that a very considerable trade existed between Spain and the other parts of Europe in

decorated Moorish tiles. These were usually squares, impressed with successive incised patterns, each design being filled with the desired colours. But the more splendid *azulejos* were differently formed, embossed patterns being stamped upon them, and the whole covered by an opaque white glaze with a stannate base. Then the lines between the raised parts were partly filled with coloured glazes, and the tiles fired. Many of these reached Flanders during the period of Spanish domination, and caused the establishment of a local industry. Dutch tiles, with local or Renaissance decorations of a somewhat crude design, both flat and embossed, early had a great vogue. They were introduced here about the year 1625. As we have seen, Owen Jones and Digby Wyatt endeavoured to popularise the Spanish-Saracenic decorated tiles, though produced on very different principles, for fireplace embellishments, but it was not until a much later day that the excellent English-made fire-resisting tiles—plain, self-coloured, with underglaze painting, or embossed—succeeded in making their merits generally recognised. The modern chimneypiece designer is quite as enamoured of glazed tiles (clean, cheerful,

light and heat reflecting materials), as were the Flemings from the latter end of the 16th to the 18th centuries.

A point of some interest brought out in our picture of the great Bruges chimneypiece is the presence of decorated iron handles pendant from the lintel over the hearth opening. These were used to hold on by when people were warming themselves before the blazing fire, to prevent accidental toppling into the fire. They suggest a peculiar social habit, and are not found out of Flanders.

With us coal not only banished the cast iron fire-back in its original form, and practically the andiron, but also introduced the grate. Early patterns took the form of iron bar baskets, usually standing on short legs. An ornamental form, combining certain features of the andiron and the fire-back, is seen in our picture of the Charterhouse fireplace. Modern renderings are shown on other plates.

These baskets were in the late 18th century and the early part of last century suspended between two low walls filling up the sides of the fireplace for some 18 in. or 2 ft., the idea being to throw the heat into the room. Robert Adam, pursuing his system of attending to every detail in

order to obtain consistency in decoration, designed the grates for his fireplaces. An example of his work is shown on one of our plates ; it must be acknowledged as far superior to the ordinary grate filling. Apart from the question of beauty, there were those of economy and efficiency. Count Rumford invented an economic coal burning grate which long influenced their construction. It was recognised that iron was not the best material, but that firebrick should be substituted. After Rumford probably the reformer who has had the most lasting effect was Dr Pridgin Teale.

Dr Teale's principles for the construction of a fireplace are as follows :—

(a) As much firebrick and as little iron as possible should be used ; (b) the back and sides should be of firebrick ; (c) the back of the fireplace should lean over the fire, while the throat of the chimney should be contracted ; (d) the bottom of the fireplace should be deep ; (e) all slits in the bottom of the grate should be as narrow as possible ; (f) the bars in front should be narrow ; (g) the space between the floor and the bottom of the fireplace should be closed in front by a close-fitting iron shield, called

an economiser. This theory is fundamentally sound, and has entered into much of present day practice, though many other inventors have come forward with slow combustion regulating grates, well fire, heaped fire, and so on. The influence that these have had on fireplace designing is shown in several of our illustrations.

To begin with, it has been found possible to blend the picturesque with the scientific, and to provide open coal fires. These are usually of fire-clay construction, with circular backs, and concave bases. Such well-like fire grates do not require bars, while they will burn peat and wood blocks as well as they will coal.

With a view to preserve the open hearth idea and yet provide a definite grate, the old-fashioned iron basket has been re-introduced, generally being placed on feet, close to, though independent of the fire-brick back and cheeks. A frequent embellishment of these fire baskets is to make the front feet stand out sideways, terminating in tall uprights simulating the form of old andirons. These may be of brass, or of hammered iron and copper, and when they are used in a fireplace with fire-brick back and tiles, or of exposed brickwork, the effect is very good.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE STOVE.

DIFFERING widely as they do in outward appearance, the box-like stove and the elaborate chimneypiece are developments stimulated by the desire to improve upon the economical inefficiency of the unprotected hearthstone. While in countries where wood was plentiful and available this development proceeded along the lines of the open box (back, side walls, and hood), in those where fuel was scarce and bad progress manifested itself by producing the enclosing box, which in its primitive form is a hole in the earth and a dome.

It will be remembered that the Saxon fireplace was of this sort, though the cover was employed as semi-extinguisher. But it is the type of village “oven” of which we read in the Scriptures, that persists in Persia

and some parts of Central Asia to this day. The Persian method was, and is, to dig a hole in the centre of the floor of the living room, line it with clay and build therein a fire of wood, charcoal, or other fuel. The clay soon becomes fire-brick and stores up heat admirably. For baking purposes the ashes are raked out and the loaves placed in the hole, which is then covered up. For heating purposes the fire is packed tight, and, a vent being provided, covered over with a flat stone. But that is not all. A square framework of wood is placed over the covered hole, and heavy rug over that, so that there results a kind of tent, under which the members of the party, seated on the floor, may thrust their feet, their hands or their whole persons, and so get warm at a very little expenditure of precious fuel. That is the type. Of course it is improved upon in houses of the well-to-do. For instance, one addition of the luxuriously inclined was a pipe communicating with the sunken stove. It was only necessary to remove the stopper and blow down the tube to fan the fire into a glowing mass, at some risk, one would imagine, of inhaling suffocating gases. We have here all the elements



German Faience Stove.

of the more permanent structural stove, which was carried into Eastern Europe by the Slavs, and into Southern and Northern Russia by the Tartars.

In its really national character the Russian stove is at once a cooking and a warming apparatus. It is built of brick or stone, often plastered over and decorated in the peculiar polychromatic arrangement of dots, lines, and zigzags common to the peasants of Little Russia, or with glazed tiles. The oven-stove is a big erection, often occupying a sixth or a tenth part of the room whether placed in the middle thereof or against the wall. In the older form it had no chimney; in the improved the chimney is carried to the roof. The top is flat, and reaches often quite halfway up to the roof. In the old type of farmhouse the sleeping quarters for the men were on a platform of planks, or kind of abortive first floor, carried up close under the roof, and covering a third or a fourth of the room. It had no partitions, the unprotected open edge being close up to the stove. But the top of the stove itself serves at once as a drying apparatus and winter quarters. Elaborate versions of such stoves were not uncommon

in the houses of the old nobility. Kiprianoff describes a remarkable one in the house of the Romanoffs, a boyard construction of the 10th century near Moscow. It was very large and covered with blue glazed tiles, each embossed with a different emblematic design and motto. Thus, one tile was ornamented with two birds flying away from each other, and the inscription, "Fidelity Unites Us." Another a tortoise and the legend, "There is no home like one's own."

There is really very little difference between this ardent moralising stove of the pre-Imperial Romanoffs and the great mediæval erections of Germany, or the Netherlands. These are often monumental, gay with colour and beautifully wrought metal. They were in use early in the Middle Ages. One of magnificent proportions discovered in the Hohen Schloss at Fussen bears the inscription : "Diser: ofen: wol: gestald: wurd: gemacht: da: man: zalt: 1514: Jar: Bey Hansen: Seltzaman: vogt: zu: Obendorst." It stands some 12 feet high and is built of ornamental hollow tiles, forming a hexagonal tower formed of hollow tiles, the

concave side outwards covered with green glaze relieved by yellow decoration. Three stoves of this type are at South Kensington, one of which, of a very curious pattern, we illustrate.

At our International Exhibition of 1862 several examples were sent over from Berlin. They were rectangular erections formed of white glazed tiles 6 and 8 inches square on their outer surface, often beautifully embossed, and having a rim all round the inner surface, so that building up and interlocking was easy, the rims being pierced and the whole kept together by wires. The base was of brickwork, about a foot high, encased in tiles, and provided with space for ashpit, the fire-box of bricks being above this, while the interior of the stove contained baffle plates. The angles and other prominent parts were decorated with modelled glazed earthenware figures and other ornaments.

It must be remembered that sometime after this, the Germans nearly succeeded in flooding Europe with small and medium sized rectangular and circular stoves of white glazed metal with fire-brick interiors, many of which even came to England.

Some attempt was made to acclimatise the manufacture over here. Alfred Stevens designed a hot air stove of iron and steel, made at Sheffield, and sent to the 1862 Exhibition. It was enamelled white, covered with raised sculpture, deeply undercut and heavy panels in pink, the cable borders and wreaths being gilded. Pugin also contributed to the Exhibition. His stove was a huge affair in mediæval styles, made at Birmingham, and carried out in hammered iron and Minton encaustic enamelled tiles. The tiles in pale tints of pink, green, blue and yellow and white, were fitted into a metal framework, had a slightly slanting hood with a square top erection. It was highly decorative, enclosed in an outer grill of iron. Armorial shields, enamelled in their proper colours, were in the slender corner turreted pillars, on banners and on the side grilles. A good specimen of this kind is to be seen in the Painted Hall at Greenwich Hospital.

C. J. Richardson designed a horribly banal stove, in the form of a suit of plate armour, which he considered suitable for the hall of a mansion. It was stoked from behind, had a funnel and emitted heat through the vizor.

It is not within the scope of this little book to deal with the relatively large manufacture of closed stoves for coal and coke, often of excellent design and tasteful decoration, which find a legitimate outlet in offices, shops and so on, but which scarcely come within the purview of the builder or lover of the House Beautiful.

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